

INTRODUCTION

THE central theme of *The Golden Bough* was the divine kingship, and it has seemed to me appropriate that a lecture established in its author's honour and now dedicated to his memory should be on that subject. I propose, therefore, to examine one of the examples of divine kingship cited by Sir James Frazer, that of the Shilluk of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and to discuss it as a problem of social structure. 121

It was recorded as early as 1905 that it was a Shilluk custom to kill their kings¹ and much information about the Shilluk kingship in general has since been collected. Professor and Mrs Seligman studied the institution in 1909-10 and it was they who brought it to the notice of Sir James Frazer and into the main stream of ethnological theory. Apart from the writings of the Seligmans and a number of articles by other hands there are two monographs on the Shilluk, *The* 114 • 121

¹ Banholzer, P. and Giffen, J. K., *The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (edited by Count Gleichen, 1905), ch. viii, p. 199.

- 114 *Shilluk People* by Professor Diedrich Westermann,
 121 who conducted linguistic research among the
 Shilluk in 1910, and Father Wilhelm Hofmayr's
Die Schilluk, largely based on the observations of
 Father Banholzer and other of his fellow Catholic
 missionaries, which date from the beginning of the
 century. Father Hofmayr himself worked among
 the Shilluk from 1906 to 1916. There has, indeed,
 long been a considerable body of knowledge about
 the Shilluk and I would not have considered it
 profitable to discuss the Shilluk kingship afresh
 were it not that new light has recently been shed on
 their social structure, and more particularly on the
 place of the kingship in it, by officers of the Sudan
 Political Service. It is significant that two of them
 studied anthropology before joining the Sudan
 Service, Mr P. P. Howell at Cambridge, from
 where he had carried out some research among the
 Shilluk before joining the Service, and Mr W. P. G.
 Thomson at Oxford. It is from this literature, and
 especially from the more recent accounts, that I
 have drawn the material for my lecture, for though
 the Shilluk live in a part of the world with which I am
 very familiar, my contact with them has been slight.
- 101 The Shilluk are the most northern of the Nilotic
 175 peoples and have been for centuries in contact

The development of the Shilluk kingship has thus produced, though not in a very pronounced or rigid form, a social hierarchy of royal house, nobility (other members of the royal clan), and commoners (including persons of client origin).

THE KINGSHIP

If we are to understand the place of the kingship in Shilluk society we must, I think, beware of attempts to define it in terms of judicial and administrative functions and view it rather as a ritual office and in a wider political context. In 1903 Father Tappi wrote that the authority of the king is 'absolute'.¹ Professor and Mrs Seligman have described the king as 'absolute head—temporal and spiritual—of a state whose territory is divided into a number of provinces, each administered by a chief directly responsible to the sovereign and acting as his proxy',² and Professor Westermann has also written of the power of the king as 'absolute'.³ Father Hofmayr says that 'Mit dem Regierungsantritt ist der König Herr des Landes, das er nach Belieben vergeben

¹ P. C. Tappi, 'Notes Ethnologiques sur les Chillouks', *Bull. Soc. Khediv. de Géog.* (1903), p. 122.

² *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan* (1932), p. 39.

³ *Op. cit.* p. xlvii.

643 kann, und Herr sogar des Eigentums seiner Unter-
 ●114 tanen'.¹ These statements would seem to require
 642 some modification. As Mr Pumphrey has pointed
 [177] out, it is unlikely that the so-called 'provinces' were
 in fact more than districts or that they were in any
 sense administrative departments before they were
 made into something of the kind by foreign govern-
 ments.² Moreover, though doubtless the king exer-
 cised considerable influence in the country and may
 have confirmed settlement chiefs in office, he did not
 nominate them. They were heads of settlements in
 virtue of their position as heads of lineages dominant
 in those settlements and although they had certain
 duties to the king it is, I think, wrong to describe
 them as being in any sense administrative officials.
 To use such terms as 'state', 'government', and
 'administration' in speaking of the Shilluk political
 system would appear to me, in the light of what is
 now known of it, to be a mistake.

643 It is true that the more recent authorities imply
 114 rather than explicitly state what in their opinion
 692 is the position of the king. Mr Howell and Mr
 Thomson speak of 'the theoretical omnipotence'
 of the king and of a 'theoretically omnipotent

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 150-1.

² *Op. cit.* pp. 18-19.

monarchy'.¹ Mr Pumphrey says that in the old days 'justice was probably rough and large-scale fighting more prevalent than litigation'.² Indeed, feuds appear to have been rampant in the past, and it is not very clear how they were composed. We are told that major disputes were sometimes brought before the king, but he can hardly be said to have tried such cases. If he intervened at all it was to support partially one side to a quarrel. We are told that when a settlement waged 'unjustifiable' war on another or refused persistently to listen to the king he might raise a 'royal levy' from the adjacent settlements and with this force and his own retainers raid the recalcitrants, seizing their cattle and burning their homesteads. He kept some of the cattle for himself and the rest were taken by those who supported his action. The raiding force would generally be strong enough to discourage resistance.³ Compensation for injury seems, therefore, to have been obtained by self-help, sometimes backed by royal intervention. Without confirmation I am not inclined to accept Father Hofmayr's statement that compensation for homicide was

¹ Howell, *op. cit.* p. 57; P. P. Howell and W. P. G. Thomson, 'The Death of a Reth of the Shilluk and the Installation of his Successor', *S.N. and R.* (1946), p. 8.

² *Op. cit.* p. 19.

³ *Ibid.* p. 12.

614 enactment of this central dogma, that it is not an
643 individual who belongs to a particular clan or to
644 a particular part of the country who is king, but
Nyikang in whom are the continuity and welfare
of the whole Shilluk people.

ROYAL SUCCESSION AND REGICIDE

643 We may now examine, in the light of what we have
● 114 learnt about the position of the kingship in Shilluk
society and particularly about the polarity so clearly
expressed in the ceremonies I have reviewed, the
mode of succession to royal office and the tradition
of regicide which is so closely connected with it.
Although Professor and Mrs Seligman say, 'We
found no basis for the belief, common among
Europeans in the Shilluk country, that there were
two, or even three or four, branches of the royal
house from which the kings were elected in turn',¹
the early *Sudan Intelligence Reports* make it clear
that this was the case in recent decades and also
that rivalry between claimants to the kingship in
[631] the second half of the nineteenth century was con-
nected with the balanced opposition between north
and south, for the halves of the kingdom fairly

¹ *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, pp. 44-5.

Consistently supported RIVAL candidates.

consistently supported rival candidates. Moreover, it is difficult to believe that the practice of the present day, by which it is more or less understood that the surviving lines of kings take it in turn to provide the king,¹ is new. A collateral royal line does not to-day contest an election on the understanding that they have next turn. The custom is for the reigning king to take under his wing a scion of a rival line and by so doing to indicate him as his successor, though he cannot nominate him and his choice may not be followed by the people. When this prince becomes king he takes under his wing a son of his protector. The reigning king insures by this convention against both rebellion by a rival line and his own line being excluded from the kingship in the future.

There can be no doubt that in recent times there has been an alternation on the throne of branches of the royal house, nor that the alternation is related to the structural dichotomy of Shillukland. We are told that if the ceremonial chiefs of the north and south fail to reach agreement in the election of a new king the chiefs of the northern settlements follow their representative and the

¹ Westermann, *op. cit.* p. xlvi; Hofmayr, *op. cit.* p. 145; Howell and Thomson, *op. cit.* p. 27.

631
 643 chiefs of the southern settlements follow their
 669 representative and the issue is fought out. It
 174 would seem probable that when there is disagree-
 631 ment it is an expression not of divergence of opinion
 643 about the merits of the candidates but of local
 644 loyalties in which different members of the royal
 house are associated with different parts of Shilluk-
 land. Whether disputed succession in the past was
 a product of local rivalries cannot perhaps now be
 determined, but it seems likely in view of the fact
 that in earlier times the king ruled from the settle-
 ment in which he was brought up or moved from
 one settlement to another and did not have a fixed
 residence at the central and neutral point of
 Fashoda.¹ I would also suggest that the associ-
 ation of princes with settlements and districts is
 clearly related to the custom by which they are
 brought up away from the capital. It is probable
 that the backing given by north and south to candi-
 dates for the kingship in past times arose from the
 fact that some princes were brought up in the north
 and some in the south. That this is the case is clear
 • [114] from Father Hofmayr's detailed notes on each of

¹ Seligman, *Report of the Wellcome Tropical Research Laboratories*, p. 229, citing information given by Father Banholzer and Dr Lambie; Westermann, *op. cit.* p. 138; Hofmayr, *op. cit.* p. 76.

the Shilluk kings.¹ It is easy to determine because the shrines of dead kings are still maintained to-day where they were born and brought up. I would further suggest that the maternal descent of princes may be of great significance in that it may be the association of maternal lineages with settlements which attaches local loyalties to a particular prince or to a particular branch of the royal house. It is therefore important that the maternal clans of the Shilluk kings should be recorded by some future observer.

The Shilluk statement that kings should be put to death if they grow old or become sick and their further statement that any prince may at any time challenge the king to mortal combat, in which the king may not call for help, cannot, I think, like the mode of succession, be understood except in relation to the political structure as a whole. There is only traditional evidence that any king has ever been killed in either way but, as Mr Howell and Mr Thomson point out,² the belief that kings have been, or might be, so killed has political implications. The assertion that a sick or old king should be killed probably means that when some disaster falls upon the Shilluk nation the tensions inherent

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 59-136.

² *Op. cit.* p. 11.

643 in its political structure become manifest in the
 578 attribution of the disaster to his failing powers.
 669 The unpopularity which national misfortune brings
 on a king enables a prince to raise rebellion. The
 643 belief that a king may legitimately be assassin-
 669 ated by a personal rival is not substantiated by
 173 recent Shilluk history any more than the belief
 that he may be put to death, but it draws some
 support from tradition and from anxiety on this
 score shown by the king and his attendants and
 from the precautions he takes to protect himself
 against assassination, especially between his elec-
 tion and investiture and during the ceremonies of
 investiture. However, the evidence suggests that the
 anxiety may not be expressed, nor the precautions
 taken, solely on account of the king's feelings of
 insecurity but partly, if not chiefly, because he is
 compelled by tradition to act furtively. Moreover,
 it is difficult to reconcile the tradition that kings
 were killed in this fashion with the account we
 have of royal election and investiture. On the
 other hand there seems little doubt that Shilluk
 kings generally met a violent death. My own
 • [114] opinion is that we must interpret Shilluk state-
 ments about the matter as indicating not that any
 prince may slay the king on his own initiative, as

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has been suggested,¹ but that any prince may lead a rebellion as the candidate of discontent, particularly of the part of the kingdom to which the prince belongs. If the king has lost support in the part to which he belongs he will probably lose also both the resulting contest and his life in it. This is the conclusion I have drawn from Father Hofmayr's involved chronicle of the Shilluk kings.² It must here be remarked that Shilluk rebellions have not been made against the kingship. On the contrary, they were made to preserve the values embodied in the kingship which were being weakened, or it was believed so, by the individual who held office. They were not revolutions but rebellions against the king in the name of the kingship.

CONCLUSION

The divine kingship, to one, perhaps the best known, of the examples of which I have devoted this lecture, has been extensively written about by ethnologists, particularly in reference to its occur-

¹ Hofmayr, *op. cit.* p. 64; Prof. and Mrs Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, pp. 90-1. Howell and Thomson (*op. cit.* p. 11 *et passim*) are more reserved.

² *Op. cit.* pp. 59-136.

FOREWORD

175 IT was in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when Mohammed Ali conquered the Sudan for Egypt, that western civilization came into touch with the Nile Negroes, and it was not until fifty years later, during the period of the great explorers—Speke, Grant, Marno, Schweinfurth, Emin Junker, and others—that there was any reliable knowledge of the character of the various tribes and of the areas they occupied. Travelling and investigating before the birth of modern anthropological methods, the information gathered by these early explorers is of relatively slight value to the anthropologist. Further progress was stopped by the rise of the Mahdi, and it was not until 1900, after the reconquest of the Sudan, that investigation became possible. 122 Acting under the advice of the many-sided scholar the late D. G. Hogarth, Sir James Currie (then Director of Education) induced the Sudan Government to provide the funds for a small ethnographic survey which we were asked to undertake. It was Sir James who made the preliminary arrangements for our visit, and to him we owe a great deal for his kindly and carefully considered introduction to what was then a difficult and little-known country, as well as for the completely free hand he gave us as to the manner of our work.

121 An ethnographic survey should not merely give an account of the main physical and cultural characters of the people of a given area, but should provide the data for the study of their relationship to each other as well as to tribes outside the area surveyed. Therefore, although it has not been possible to obtain the same amount of information among all the peoples studied, we have tried to adhere to a general plan. Whenever possible, subjects have been measured and photographed, not only to give an idea of the physical characters of each tribe but because we believe these characters to be most important in settling the affinities of tribal and larger groups. The political and social organization has been recorded (at least in outline) with as much as possible of the religious beliefs, for without a knowledge of these no aspect of tribal life can be understood. Whilst no people has been investigated so thoroughly as to yield a complete cultural picture, we have, we believe, laid the foundation of a scientific study of the peoples of the Sudan. In doing this we have constantly

121 kept before us the necessities of the official, for the greatest need of the administrator is to understand the politico-religious outlook of a subject race: rules of land tenure or criminal procedure are worthless unless there is knowledge of the social fabric and of the attitude towards the supernatural. For these reasons we have recorded all that we could of the part played by the rain-maker and other departmental experts, as well as the attitude towards ancestral and other spirits, and, since an understanding of life within the extended family group is almost equally important, we have paid much attention to kinship systems, noting the terms and so far as possible analysing the duties and privileges incumbent upon kinsmen. Certain important aspects of magic could not be studied, as this subject for the most part requires an intimate knowledge of the language of the people investigated. In this matter Professor Evans-Pritchard's results are particularly valuable.

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We made no attempt to study technological processes, but specimens of any object of outstanding interest, either from the point of view of adaption or of distribution, were, if possible, collected and presented to the National Museum. Linguistics were also outside the scope of our study, yet in southern Kordofan we were so impressed by the difference of the languages spoken there from those of the Nile-Nubians with which they had been previously confused that we spent some time in recording the elements of these tongues.

Whenever possible we have used the genealogical method, and have found it of the greatest value; we have however refrained from publishing genealogies, except when these are necessary to illustrate some particular point.

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For those tribes of which we have a reasonable knowledge our material is arranged under five headings (viz. "Regulation of Public Life", "Kinship, Family Life, and Marriage", "Religion", "Rain-making", "Death and Funeral Ceremonies"). Where, however, we are dealing with little-known peoples, e.g. those of Darfung, or areas of intense tribal confusion and disintegration, as the south-western Bahr el Ghazal, it would be misleading to attempt this, and such knowledge as we have is given under tribal headings. Nor have we always been able to be strictly logical in our arrangement, sometimes logic has perforce yielded to convenience.

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Our first expedition, in 1909-10, was naturally from north to south along the Nile, and we also visited the Nuba. The second expedition, in 1911-12, was mainly east to west, when we studied

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the Kababish of Kordofan and the Beja of the Red Sea Province. It was not until 1921 that we were able to resume our work, the winter of 1921-2 being spent mainly among the tribes south and east of the Dinka, i.e. among the Bari and the Lotuko-speaking tribes. Severe illness during the next few years negatived further work in the tropics, but the survey was taken up and extended by our friend and pupil, Professor E. E. Evans-Pritchard. In three expeditions he worked especially among the tribes of the south-west Bahr el Ghazal and the Azande, later extending his studies to that most difficult people the Nuer. Professor Evans-Pritchard has already begun to publish his results, largely in *Sudan Notes and Records*, but besides being able to avail ourselves of these for our West Bank chapters we have, owing to his remarkable generosity, had at our full disposal his photographs, his Bahr el Ghazal and Nuer notes, and the almost finished manuscript of his Azande monograph, a study which will undoubtedly rank as one of the most exhaustive and authoritative of anthropological works. We desire to take this opportunity of emphasizing how slight is our first-hand knowledge of Azande and Nuer, and how greatly we are indebted to him; we would also point out that part of the chapter dealing with the Fung Province is based on his material. But although we have had the benefit of his constant help and advice, and not only in regard to the above-mentioned peoples, Professor Evans-Pritchard must in no way be held responsible for our presentation of the facts or our conclusions concerning them. The same holds with regard to two others who have helped us in the most generous and unselfish manner, freely putting at our disposal their great experience and the contents of their notebooks. We refer to the Venerable Archdeacon Shaw and to Mr. G. O. Whitehead. The former has lived for many years among the Dinka, the latter is our leading authority on the Bari and the Bari-speaking tribes; from both we have received help of inestimable value.

In connection with the Bari we must also express our gratitude to an old friend, Mr. Ernest Haddon, of the Uganda Civil Service, who a quarter of a century ago when the Bari country formed part of Uganda presided over the destinies of the tribe and compiled an MS., later put at our disposal, from which we have not hesitated to quote.

We have, indeed, everywhere been most fortunate in the assistance rendered to us. Two successive Governors, General Sir Reginald Wingate and Major-General Sir Lee Stack, stimulated our work by

CHAPTER II
THE SHILLUK

131 THE Shilluk country forms a narrow fringe on the west bank of the Nile, from Kaka in the north to within 30 miles of Lake No in the south. From Kodok to Taufikia the Shilluk also occupy the east bank, and their villages extend some 35 miles up the Sobat River, principally on the north bank. Theirs is the flat grass country, dry in the dry season, swampy in the wet, extending on both sides of the Nile; hence cattle are their wealth and principal care, and although a considerable quantity of millet is grown not enough is harvested to provide fully for the relatively dense population, and scarcity is by no means unusual. A census taken in 1903 gave a population of nearly 40,000, possessing over 12,000 head of cattle and nearly 64,000 sheep and goats. No doubt the number of cattle returned was unduly low, but, making all allowances, the Shilluk are poorer in cattle than are the Dinka. The 1903 figure is far below that suggested by Schweinfurth (1,200,000), and at the present time it is likely that the Shilluk number some 100,000.

171 We have stated in Chapter I that in our opinion the homeland of the Shilluk-speaking tribes lay to the east of Lake Victoria. We have 174 no historical record of a northerly movement, all we can say is that a series of migrations gave rise to a number of tribes speaking Shilluk dialects in what is now the Bahr el Ghazal Province, and that from one of these, the Luo, the Shilluk nation of history originated.

• [114] The researches of the Rev. Father Hofmayr of the Austrian Mission¹ indicate that the Luo—the Shilluk-speaking “Jur”—of the Bahr el Ghazal Province represent the remains of what was once a greater Luo people, from whom are derived the present Shilluk nation, or, more accurately, a certain number of their leading families including that of the king. Here in the neighbourhood of the present Luo country, the land of Dimo of the legends, Nyakang—the leader, culture-hero, and first king of the Shilluk—lived with his half-brother’s son, Dimo, until the enmity of the latter drove Nyakang and his followers to seek fresh homes to the east and so brought into existence

¹ Wilhelm Hofmayr, *Die Shilluk. Geschichte, Religion und Leben eines Nilom-Stammes*, Wien, 1925.

174 the Shilluk nation. As Nyakang passed northwards along the river
171 he incorporated the inhabitants; moreover, he had magic, and so
where men were lacking he turned hippopotami and other animals
into human form to become his subjects.¹

174 The Shilluk, though generally tall and long-headed, seem to us
142 to vary more among themselves than any of the riverain tribes of
which we have first-hand knowledge, for while the subject (No. 1)
figured on Pl. III may be taken to represent an average Shilluk
youth (style of head-dress now unfashionable), a long-faced, straight-
nosed and thin-lipped type, as shown in its extreme form in No. 2
is by no means uncommon, as also the handsome if somewhat fierce
type shown in No. 3; there is, too, a rare, exaggeratedly negroid,
type (No. 4), but this can hardly be accepted as truly Shilluk without
prolonged genealogical research. Such wide variation can be best
explained by assuming that Nyakang and his followers represented
142 a stock carrying more Hamitic blood than the inhabitants of the
144 riverain villages and other stocks who united with them, and we have
no doubt that so far as the Nilotes are concerned even at the present
day the maximum of Hamitic blood is to be found among the Shilluk,
who, with the exception of the Azande, are the best organized people
in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and who of all the black tribes offered
the most determined opposition to the Khalifa and his followers.

233 The wealth and social position of the Shilluk are estimated in
[556] cattle; sheep and goats are kept, but these are not regarded in the
same, almost sacred, light as cows. Milking is done by boys and old
[462] men, women not being allowed to milk. In every village there is
a number of cattle byres, such as those shown on Pl. V., but except

[173] ¹ A number of Westermann's texts (*The Shilluk People*, Phil., 1912) refer to groups of the
[539] earlier inhabitants absorbed into the Shilluk nation by Nyakang, including turtle-men (op. cit.,
[114] p. 164) and some mysterious river people (pp. xiv, 164-5). One of the first stories that the
inquirer into the wanderings of Nyakang will hear is that of Obog or Obogi, who allowed
himself to be sacrificed in order that Nyakang might pass across a river blocked with
vegetation. The tale, given here in Westermann's version (op. cit., p. 165), constitutes a con-
venient starting-point for inquiries into the route taken by Nyakang:—

"When Nyakang came, he went to the Khor Anzafi, with his followers; he found the
river was shut up by the sudd, so that Nyakang did not find a passage. And a certain man
who was an albino asked them, 'Nyakang, why do you stop? Is it because you do not
find a passage?' He replied, 'Yes, I do not see a way where to pass.' The man said,
'When I have finished eating, I shall come, I will be killed with a spear, my blood will flow
into the river, and the sudd will break away.' And Nyakang spewed the man, his blood
flowed into the river, and the sudd broke away. Thus Nyakang found a passage."

Nothing definite can be said as to the date of Nyakang. Hofmayr (op. cit., 64) thinks that
Ossio, the fifth king of the genealogy, is the first historic king, and dates his reign 1600-35.
Presumably this is reached by reckoning backwards; it is a reasonable estimate, giving an
average reign of about 13 years, and allowing thirty to a generation.

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613 man of that name; should this *gol* become strong enough, it will
614 take a new name and become *kwa* Kako. This agrees well with
621 Westermann's statement that *gol* means enclosure, home, homestead,
family. It is seen in the names of some sections, e.g. Golobogu,
corresponding with the *kwa* Obogo of Westermann.

621 Several hamlets in the midst of their cultivation patches form a
fane, which might be called a village group, under a chief (*jago*).
631 A number of *fane*, each with its own grazing ground (*wak*), form a
fodo (district), a number of *fodo* going to form each of the ten provinces
of the Shilluk kingdom.

621 Fenikang, which is relatively large for a Shilluk village, consists
of only two clans, the Golobogu and Pameiti, both traditionally
attached to the great shrine. As their homesteads are built in two
groups round the dancing space by the shrine, Fenikang corresponds
more to our idea of a village than do most of the groups of isolated
Shilluk hamlets, while Fashoda, with perhaps forty to fifty homesteads,
has a special organization since it is inhabited only by royal wives
and a few herdsmen. As a rule the number of homesteads in any
Shilluk village is not great; there are, however, some large "villages".
Atwadoi, north of Kodok, is, or was, the largest, and in 1903 was
said to contain 120 homesteads.

614 As regards the clans themselves, Westermann gives a formidable
list¹; actually many of these are not clans; he mistakenly raises a
● 114 number of princely families to clan rank (e.g. *kwa* Nyadwai, the
descendants of King Nyadwai) and he also includes a *kwa* Nikai,
which, as Hofmayr points out,² stands for *kwa* Nyakai, i.e. the family
of Nyakai, the crocodile mother of Nyakang (pp. 85-6) who is
"related" to every member of the royal family. Whether families
founded by foreigners have attained true clan rank, e.g. *kwa* Okogi,
we cannot say, but it may well be so.

784 There are numerous observances connected with animals, including
825 some which might be called taboos, but we did not ourselves discover
114 any definite evidence of totemism, though as already stated clan
exogamy prevails. On the other hand both Westermann and Hofmayr
consider that totemism exists. Westermann gives the following
773 example:—

825 "The ostrich and the crow and Deng were split out of the gourd, all three
are three-twin children. Deng went into a certain village, the ostrich went
into the bush, and the crow flew up. We were born by Deng. Akwoe (the

¹ Op. cit., 137-34.

² Op. cit., 237, where Westermann's list is criticised.

773 son of Deng) came in the time of Duwat . . . he came into the Shilluk
825 country to the people of the king (that is to Fashoda). And when we became
many some went to Fenikang Odurojo, but some remained at Fenidwai.
Thus we separated from each other. . . . That is the beginning of (the village
of) Adefalo—the ostrich and crow are of our family. They are not eaten by
us on account of the *dwalo* sickness.”¹

Westermann states that the common ancestor to whom members of a clan trace descent is in most cases a man, but that “some of the clans claim descendency from an animal”.² Hofmayr states that the number of totems among the Shilluk is small, and gives the following examples: ostrich, hippopotamus, Varanus lizard, giraffe, *gu* (a fish), a gourd, *ayiado* (a bean), *cwa* (tamarind), and *tuko* (hearth-stone). This seems to imply a wide distribution of particular clans. He also cites *curro* (a fish), the crocodile, the crested crane, and the knee-joint as totems of Tonga in the extreme south.³

262 As to the origin of these totems, if totems they be, we were informed
773 that the prohibition to eat the fish *curro* was directly due to Nyakang,
825 who told his people to bring him all the fish they caught in the river.
Although they brought him many fish, they kept back one, and Nyakang, who knew this, as in dreams men are aware of things happening at a distance, told his people, i.e. all the Shilluk, that this fish must always be unlawful food to them. Concerning the crocodile, we were informed that all might eat it except those possessed by Nyakang or his mother, who if they ate it would die, and for this reason many *ajuago* might not eat it. Further questions on totemic lines elicited the statement: “If they [a group] are called thus [an animal or clan name] because it is a name let them eat him; if he was an ancestor [they] would not eat him.”

● 114 Considering the data just cited we are struck by the fact that
177 Westermann's example is almost in the typical Dinka form of totemism
(twin birth of totem animal and human progenitor of clan), while
825 the example given by Hofmayr is from Tonga at the extreme south of the Shilluk country, where, as we discovered, mixed marriages resulting in a mingling of Dinka and Shilluk cults were by no means uncommon. We are then inclined to consider that Shilluk totemism—as far as it exists—is due to Dinka influence.⁴ In any

¹ Op. cit., 178-9.

² Op. cit., 127.

³ Op. cit., 236.

⁴ Hofmayr quotes a Shilluk text in which belief in a fish, a woman, and a gourd as ancestors is ascribed to the Dinka (op. cit., p. 235), i.e. in principle it agrees with that given by Westermann as applying to the Shilluk. Since writing the above we have heard from Mr. Heasty of a *kwa* Jang with the ostrich as totem, ostrich, crow, and man having emerged from a gourd as described on p. 41. Jang is the common Nilotic word for Dinka. Mr. Heasty, who does not regard the Shilluk as truly totemic, adds, “certainly many of the *kwa* have no totem.”

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In any

case, while exogamy is generally observed, the association of particular groups of men and animals seems to make no great emotional appeal to the Shilluk—to be but little loaded with affect—compared with the similar feelings among the Dinka. We may also refer to the suggestion put forward by Hofmayr,¹ that the incoming Shilluk had a definite totemic system, which became less important as the cult of Nyakang developed and the newcomers mixed with the earlier inhabitants of what is now the Shilluk country. Evidence for or against this hypothesis may be forthcoming when we know more of the beliefs of the Luo and Anuak. We therefore leave the subject with the observation that the existence of a partial totemism of the Dinka pattern among the Shilluk would be explained if the earlier inhabitants absorbed by Nyakang and his horde—it will be remembered that these included animals which he turned into men—were Dinka, or folk with kindred beliefs.

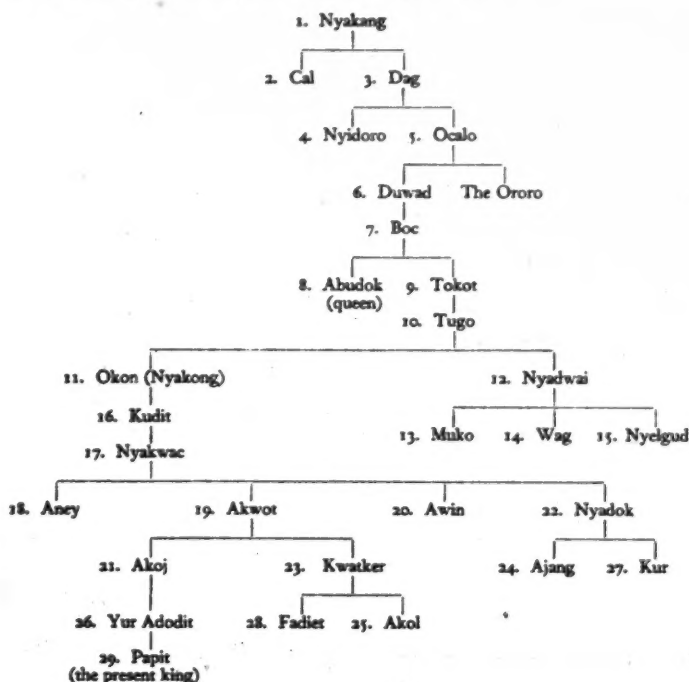
Dr. Tucker has given us some interesting information which, though it does not actually concern totemism, might at first sight be confused with it and is worthy of further investigation. The inhabitants of a village, Pathuor, mark a scorpion several inches in length in raised cicatricial tissue on the shoulder—left for men and right for women so that it is not hidden by the shoulder cloth. The reason they give is that they “desire to cultivate the strength of the scorpion”; yet they kill without scruple scorpions that they find in their huts. Other designs scarred on the shoulder, described by Dr. Tucker, include the horse, tortoise, aeroplane, and the sun. He reports a most curious instance of cicatrization as a result of a village quarrel. One village, Paalo, decided that it would no longer eat the fish *okok*, because the village Pajur, with which it was at enmity, is situated at the edge of a creek where many *okok* are caught. The Paalo proceeded to represent an *okok* in raised cicatrices on the shoulder; Pajur retaliated by avoiding lemons—because Paalo, living near the mission, grows lemons—and they scarred lemons on their shoulders. This was about a year ago; goodwill now reigns between the villages, and consequently the *okok* and the lemon are no longer avoided.

Turning now to the king and royal family, we would emphasize that the Shilluk king is the supreme spiritual and temporal ruler, and that to separate his functions—as for the sake of clarity we are about to do—is an artificial device. Nevertheless, we shall now

¹ Op. cit., 233.

643 limit ourselves as far as possible to the temporal side of the royal
functions and postpone our account of the king's spiritual duties
and privileges until we consider religion. With such an artificial
division a certain amount of inconsistency and overlap is inevitable;
for instance, the succession to the throne will be treated under religion,
although the election is largely a temporal matter.

643 We accept Father Hofmayr's genealogical table of the royal house
173 rather than those of previous inquirers, including our own,¹ on
account of his excellent panel of native informants. It is this table,
114 with spelling modified, that we now reproduce.



643 The Shilluk king rules by divine right as a direct descendant of
173 Nyakang, the first Shilluk king. We found no basis for the belief,
common among Europeans in the Shilluk country, that there were

[113] ¹ "Cult of Nyakang and the Divine Kings of the Shilluk": *Fourth Report of the Wellcome Tropical Research Laboratories*, vol. 2, Khartoum, 1911.

KINSHIP AND FAMILY LIFE

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Westermann gives *mayo-mai* and *ma-mek* for aunt,¹ without specifying what is meant by this term, but it seems probable that he found on the Sobat the same nomenclature in use as we found at Fenikang and that *mayo-mai* corresponds to the word spelt *mia* here. (61) [114]

From the above it is clear that the Shilluk system, whether it be considered classificatory or not, recognizes clan relationship as well as family relationship, and distinction according to generation. Clans are definitely patrilineal, and the terms used by a man present no anomalies. All men of a man's own generation in his clan are his *uwa*; his mother's clansmen of his own generation are his *una*. All men of his mother's generation whom she calls *uwa* are his *na*; from the point of function, however, there is a distinction—it is only the mother's father's son who is important as a *na*. For a man all his wife's clansmen are his *ora*; this is, however, a reciprocal term used between a man and his wife's parents and a man and his wife's brother. The reciprocal to wife's brother (sister's husband) is used in a wide sense to include the husband of any "cousin"—*nyüwa*, *nyimä*, *nyima*, or *nywaja*. As will be seen later, the most important of these *ora* are the own sister's husband and the husband of the *nywaja*. A man calls *ora* the "parents-in-law" of all his *uwa*, and also the brothers of the wives of his *uwa*. When *ora* means "mother-in-law" it is used in the widest classificatory sense to include the wives of any man whom the wife calls "father", as well as any woman who stands in that relationship (classificatory mother-in-law) to a man's *uwa* (examples will be given later). The wife's sister, however, is not *ora*, but the wife's brother's wife is.² Thus it may be seen that the *ora* cannot possibly belong to one clan but are the "mothers", "fathers", and "brothers-in-law" of a man in the wide classificatory sense of the terms mother, father, and brother. (64)

When a woman speaks, the term *ora* has a much less wide significance. Her *ora* are only those "brothers" of her husband who are the sons of his mother and of his mother's sister. The term *ora* implies respect and ceremonial behaviour when used by either sex.

Yura.—This term requires special mention. It is applied by a woman only to the *uwa* of her husband. Correctly speaking it is

¹ Op. cit., 290.

² The wife's brother's wife may merely be regarded as one of the wife's people and so an *ora*; but it must be noted that among some other African peoples the wife's brother's wife is potentially a "mother-in-law", because a man has a right to her daughter as a secondary wife.

KINSHIP AND FAMILY LIFE

55

be that a married woman considers herself a member of her husband's family, but as a sign of respect addresses her husband's relatives in each case as though she belonged to a younger generation than she does in reality. A custom in vogue among the Shilluk may have some connection with this usage, i.e. widows other than the mother are taken as wives by a man's sons. Further, it is not considered disgraceful for young unmarried sons to sleep with their own father's wives. A young wife may thus see herself as the consort to two generations at once, and address her husband's sisters and parents by those terms that she would use if she were wife of the younger of the two successive mates. A woman still belongs to her own clan after marriage, so it seems strange that she should use the terms employed by her husband. In this connection it must be noted that in some districts husband and wife address one another as *umia* and *nyimia* before the birth of the first child, and that a man calls his wife's sister *nyimia*. This last anomaly may be due to some feeling that the wife is taken into the family of her husband, though no adoption ceremony was discovered. It should be noted that a man calls his wife's sister "sister"; he does not treat her with any ceremony, and if she visits her married sister the husband is not bound by any taboos, though he cannot have connection with her as he can with his *yura*. In certain circumstances (the death or barrenness of a wife) he may marry her. [601] [587] [837] [614] [851] [607]

Everywhere the "in-law" relationship is one that requires much tact, and the Shilluk, as is usual in savage society, show respect by means of ceremonial avoidance. While much emphasis is laid upon the avoidance of persons related by marriage, it should be noted that there is no avoidance between blood-relations—a man does not avoid his mother, sister, or daughter. 606 607 593

A Shilluk avoids all those whom he calls *ora*, of whom the first in importance is the wife's mother. In those parts of the Shilluk country that we visited, avoidance of the mother-in-law implied that a man must not enter her house, and care would be taken never to meet her face to face out of doors. If a man saw his mother-in-law he would take a different road and send a friend to greet her respectfully. We did not find avoidance carried to the length described by Hofmayr, who states that a man may not enter the village in which his mother-in-law dwells; one informant, however, told us that a man might not enter her village until the cows of the bride-wealth had been paid. [114] • [583] 606

793 and officiate in the ceremonies, but it is perhaps true to say that only
767 the beasts for minor sacrifices (recovery from illnesses, etc.) are
killed by them. Hofmayr states that the distinctive mark of the
[292] *bareth* is a necklace of disc beads of ostrich egg-shell, but that they also
301 wear anklets of glass beads, white and green. The *bareth* eat the flesh
of the sacrifices and drink the milk of the cattle belonging to the shrine;
they are responsible too for the disposal of the bones of the sacrifice,
which they cast into the river.

778 The contents of the *kengo* vary, but they always include certain
346 sacred spears, called *alodo*, representing those used by Nyakang and
his companions.

In 1910 we were told that one of the five huts of the Fenikang
shrine was in a special sense the house of Nyakang, which he was
thought to inhabit. It was distinguished by a number of very rough
[532] paintings on its outer wall, some of which could be recognized as
representing animals, but we could not learn that the paintings had
any special significance. Before the door of the hut were a number
of horns of the cattle slain in sacrifice (in 1911 wrongly described as
elephant tusks), their broad ends thrust into the ground; within
[114] there were said to be skins on the floor, as if for Nyakang to rest upon.
237 Some of the "spears of Nyakang" (*alodo*) are kept here, and there is
in this shrine an extremely sacred stool, which may be kept in this
hut or may be preserved with some of the sacred spears and a number
of elephant tusks in one of the other huts of the shrine,
used by the guardians and for storing the millet brought as
offerings when the crop is cut. In 1921 we were struck afresh with
the resemblance of the shrine to a homestead, with exceptionally
large huts; it had been rebuilt since 1910, when we first visited
Fenikang, and there were now no horns in front of any hut. At this
793 time (1921) the shrine had been entrusted by the king to the care
778 of a most intelligent elderly Dinka woman, by name Aker—widow
of the kings Kur and Fadiet—who was the chief priestess of the shrine.
She had three huts and a cattle byre near the shrine; in one hut she
[567] kept her beer, and here millet was ground, the two others were for
her slaves, who as well as her cattle were provided by the king. We
are not certain whether she ever slept in the shrine. According
[644] to Shilluk custom Aker had left Kodok during her two pregnancies,
843 but on neither occasion had she been sent to Fenikang; it is, indeed,
improbable that a royal wife would be sent to a village containing
a shrine, as it might be difficult to accommodate her cattle and those
of the shrine attendants as well as the village
beasts,

782 the shrine. When the millet is cut everyone brings a portion to the
796 *bareth Nyakang*. This is ground and made into porridge with water
brought from the river; some is poured out at the threshold of the
hut regarded as specially sacred to Nyakang, and some on the ground
within the hut, the outside of which is also anointed with the mixture.
Until this has been done no one may eat of the new crop.

643 There is a ceremony at the accession of each king, when the newly
782 consecrated ruler should send cattle to each shrine of Nyakang, and
also presents of spears and other valuable objects, such as ostrich eggs
and elephant tusks. Some of the beasts are sacrificed outside the
enclosure, others are added to the herd belonging to the shrine.
We have no information concerning the details of this ceremony,
but we do not doubt that the flesh of the slaughtered beasts is eaten
by the *bareth*.

755 When a man is sick he may bring or send a sheep to the nearest
782 shrine of Nyakang, where the attendants sprinkle it with water and
spear it. They pray for the sick man, who eats a part of the flesh
of the sheep or drinks some of the water in which the meat has been
boiled. The rest of the sheep is eaten by the guardians of the shrine
and their friends without any ceremony, but the bones and perhaps
the intestines are thrown into the river.

782 We add an account of a ceremony that took place on 9th December,
796 1921, at which we were present, premising that our notes were made
after, not during, the ceremony and are certainly incomplete:—

[194] When we reached Fenikang at the end of November, 1921, the
shrine of Nyakang was being prepared for a ceremony, having for
its object the saving of the millet from attacks by flocks of innumerable
small birds. A band of women, perhaps as many as forty, had started
to clear the area round the shrine, pulling up every weed and blade
of grass. Often they would sing, keeping time by clapping their
hands; or they would get up and dance slowly round the outside
fence of the shrine, and then sitting down would chant another song,
occasionally breaking out into cries resembling the Arab *zagharit*.
[574] Some of the women were visitors to Fenikang; unfortunately we
did not discover whether they had come specially for this purpose,
or to which clans they belonged. For the next few days there were
always a few women at work weeding, plastering mud, painting the
walls, and generally tidying the shrine, or bringing in baskets of sand
from outside for the floor of the enclosure.

Although the time was undoubtedly due for the ceremony its

173 who was so distressed by the stench from his companion's body that
643 he shouted to the people outside the hut commanding them on no
account to leave his successor to die slowly in such a manner.

643 For a long time no public announcement of the king's death is
made, but the news spreads gradually.

766 We could not discover by whom and under what circumstances
the king's body was brought to his birthplace, where he would be
buried and his grave shrine erected. It must, however, be remembered
that Fashoda has not always been the home of the king, for although
it is uncertain how the change was brought about, there is no doubt
that formerly each Shilluk king reigned and was buried in the village
in which he was born and in which his afterbirth was buried. Some
months after death, when decomposition was judged to have proceeded
so far that little but the bones would be found, the hut was broken
down by the *ororo*, a grave was dug, and the bones of the king and
of his companion were placed in it wrapped in the skin of one of the
sacrificed oxen. A hut was built over the grave, and one or two
others put up within the enclosure for the attendants on the new
shrine which had thus arisen. Westermann states that this ceremony
was the public notification that the king had disappeared, and he
describes the sacrifice of a man and woman by drowning; the victims
were bound and placed in a canoe, which with many spears, bells,
beads, and pottery vessels was towed into the middle of the river
and sunk.¹

114 The following account of the election and consecration to the
kingship of the chosen prince is a summary composed from the
accounts given by Seligman, Munro, and Hofmayr.² It does not
pretend to be exhaustive, and where apparent discrepancies occur
in the sources we have generally made use of unpublished information
collected in 1921, or incorporated the details we consider most likely
to be accurate.

643 The interregnum after the king's death usually lasts about a year,
a period of anxiety and uncertainty but which ceremonially should
be long enough to permit of the sowing and considerable growth
of the next season's millet crop, perhaps even of its harvesting. During

¹ Op. cit., 136.

² Seligman, "Cult of Nyakang, and the Divine Kings of the Shilluk": *Fourth Report of the Wellcome Tropical Research Laboratories*, vol. 2, Khartoum, 1911; P. Munro, "Installation of the Ret. Chol (King of the Shilluks)": *S.N. & R.*, i, 1918, 145-52; Hofmayr, op. cit., 145-50. Munro was an eye-witness of the first part of the installation of the present king, Papit, on 17th January, 1918. Westermann has a text dealing with the installation of the king, but this is necessarily short and incomplete.

RELIGION

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We have

already referred to *par Juok* (p. 75), the country of the dead, to be reached after long wandering in the bush, but there is also a chthonic element in Shilluk ancestor worship; the spirit persists in or round the grave and may harm its living relatives, e.g. the death of a missionary's wife shortly after that of her husband was attributed to the ghost of the latter, while Hofmayr quotes a remark of the chief Yangjok to the effect that evil comes on man from below.¹ Again, the Shilluk undoubtedly fear the *cen*, the malevolent element that persists after the death of one who has died in hatred of friends or relatives, though here again the belief does not seem to bulk as largely as among the Acholi.

Offerings and sacrifice may be made to ancestors, but in our limited experience we have met with no instance that could certainly be dissociated from the cult of the royal ancestors or in which the ancestral spirits were not confused with or associated with Juok. It is true that Hofmayr describes offerings to ancestors² but his descriptions, taken for the most part from notes of colleagues, are not very convincing, as there is nothing to show that the cult of Nyakang or his descendants was specifically excluded. On the other hand he cites two short chants³ which may be regarded as evidence of prayer to the ancestors:—

sere kwaje mayegen

"The people entreat their mothers (ancestors)."

sere kwaje tiengen

"The people entreat their people (their dead)."

A hæmorrhage followed by sudden death is called "the spears of the dead", i.e. the victim has been stabbed by a ghostly weapon, but the Shilluk expression, *tong tieng pa Juok*, seems to bring Juok into the matter. A more definite relation to ancestral spirits is seen in a note by Banholtzer, quoted by Hofmayr,⁴ to the effect that warriors obtained the services of an *ajuago* to invoke their ancestors, that the spirits of the slain may be harmless. A sheep is killed and part of the viscera placed in a pot and buried as an offering to those in the underworld.⁵

¹ Op. cit., 230.

² Op. cit., 229.

³ Op. cit., 230.

⁴ Loc. cit.

⁵ Oyer records that many Shilluk "take an offering of the first fruits to the grave of an ancestor, usually the father. . . . The grain is made into a sort of batter and poured out on the grave. The man then says that he has given his father a taste" ("Nikawng's place in the Shilluk Religion": *S.N. & R.*, i, 1918, 286). But in another passage Oyer clearly shows an association of the ancestral spirit with Juok (for we assume that "God" is a translation of "Juok"): ". . . When prayer is to be offered to the spirit of a dead person, a female sheep is brought to the grave. If the person making the prayer is not the son of the

PREFACE.

121 In the summer of 1910 the Prussian Board of Education provided me with
122 the means to undertake a journey to the Northern Sudan. My object was to
make linguistic studies. During my stay in the Sudan the material for this work
was collected. My studies in the Shilluk language and people are due to a
request made to me by the Reverend C. R. Watson D. D., of Philadelphia Pa.,
Corresponding Secretary of the Mission of the United Presbyterian Church of
North America. Mr. Watson, having heard of my intended journey to Egypt
and the Sudan, asked me to visit the United Presbyterian Church's Mission
on the Sobat, and to study the language of that district which lies within the
sphere of their activity. By supplying the necessary funds for this part of the
journey and for my stay in the Sudan, I was enabled to carry out this propo-
sition, which was at the same time of importance for my linguistic studies.

114 I left for the Sudan at the beginning of August 1910, where I staid in
Khartum and on the Sobat till the middle of November.

570 The results of my work obtained during this comparatively short time would
not have been possible had it not been for the extremely active and kind
support rendered me everywhere in the Sudan by the American missionaries.
Not only was I able to profit by their kind hospitality, but they also most
generously placed at my disposal their extensive knowledge of the country,
people and language. I owe my practical introduction to the language to Dr.
Thomas A. Lambie, medical missionary at Khartum, in whose house I was
privileged to stay for over a month. In addition to the contributions signed
by him he also supplied me with several native texts from his collection which
will be found incorporated in this book.

The missionaries on Doleib Hill, Mr. C. B. Guthrie and the Reverend D.
S. Oyler also helped me on all possible occasions; above all they introduced
me to the Shilluks and put me into touch with those natives who were neces-
sary and useful to me in my researches. Both these gentlemen and the Reverend
E. McCreery and Mr. R. W. Tidrick have supplied me with very valuable
information in answer to questions addressed to them since my return to Ger-
many, some of which appears as signed contributions. Part of it has been
included in the introduction. During the winter of 1911 I had the pleasure of
receiving the Reverend McCreery while he was in Berlin, and thus had an
opportunity of discussing grammatical questions with him.

I must express my sincere thanks to all those who have assisted me in their

[p. vi is blank]

XXII

Introduction

ichneumon (mangouste). The natives also hunt the hare, porcupine, ground-squirrel, rat, and hedgehog. The rivers and khora, and chiefly their sidearms, are populated by crocodiles, hippos, and numerous fish, some of which weigh up to lbs. 200. The birds are mainly riverain: cranes, storks, herons, egrets, fish-eagles, marabouts, pelicans, ibises, ducks, geese; the guinea-fowl is very common; numberless swarms of dura-birds (*Pyromelana franciscana*) are a great nuisance to the farmer; besides them quails, pigeons, turtle-doves, hawks, crows, swallows, owls, and starlings are frequent. Of snakes the largest is python; of poisonous species the puff-adder and some others occur; harmless snakes are numerous.

POPULATION

The population amounts to about 60 000 souls,¹ who live in a little more than 1200 villages, and 10 000 "domiciles", each of which consists of three to five huts. Accordingly the average number of people living in a village is 50, and one domicile is inhabited by about six persons. The largest village is Atwadoi in a district of the same name north of Kodok; it consists (1903) of 120 domiciles. The villages generally lie in the belt between the swamp of the Nile-bank and the forest. There are, however, eight groups of villages 12—22 miles inland, away from the river. The country is, for its size, and considering the fact that only in the higher parts settlements are possible, thickly populated. "Right away from Kaka to Lake No is a continuous string of villages lying about a mile from the river. There are only two points in the whole of this distance, at which the interval between villages exceeds two miles, and these are the points where grazing is bad, between Akurwar and Nun, and between Nielwag and Nyagwado." A. E. S., p. 193.

According to Schweinfurth, the population was much larger formerly. In 1871, when the Egyptians had conquered the country, a census was taken; the villages on the left bank of the Nile were almost exactly 3000. The inhabitants of this part numbered one million, each village consisting of 45—200 huts, a hut comprising four persons. No part of Africa, not even of the world, is so densely populated. "The whole western Nile bank, as far as the boundaries of the country reach, is like one single village, whose parts are separated by a distance of only 500 to 1000 steps. The hut-clusters are built in an astonishing regularity, and are so crowded together that from a distance they look like a cluster of mushrooms."

The statement of a population of more than one million is probably too high; the Shilluks have doubtlessly suffered cruelly from wars and raids, but in spite of this a decrease from one million to 60 000 within a time of forty years is hardly thinkable.

Since the time the people live under the peace of Anglo-Egyptian rule, they

¹ This is the number of the White Nile and Sobat Shilluks only; if all the Shilluk speaking people are included, the population will amount to several hundreds of thousands.

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XL

Introduction

latter; when a person is ill, they may say: *gɛ jwɔk* "Why, Jwok?" The sudden and violent death of a man is regarded as being caused by Jwok. But I do not think there is any ethical motive in our sense underlying this belief; Jwok has simply killed the man for having offended him, probably without knowing it. The name of Jwok is used in a favourable sense in the following phrases of salutation: when a person arrives, he is saluted: *yi kɛl jwɔk* "you have brought Jwok"; to one starting on a journey they say: *yi wɛt jwɔk* "you may hold fast Jwok". — Jwok has also the meaning of "sickness"; the reason for this is the conviction that Jwok is the cause of sickness; "he is sick", they express by "he has Jwok", "Jwok is upon him".

Although the Shilluk does certainly not connect with the word Jwok the same notion as we do with "God", Jwok is doubtless the only word fit for being used in the Christian sense. It is true the word occurs in stories in rather a disrespectful sense, any being with more than natural powers being called a Jwok; but this is so in analogous cases with many African peoples, and will almost always be so in heathen languages; it can therefore not form a real obstacle for using the word in Christian preaching and literature.

[In older literature the name Kelge appears as that of the "creator of the Shilluks." I have never heard this name].

773 NYIKANG AND
THE ORIGIN
OF THE
SHILLUKS

The tradition on the origin of man or rather of the Shilluks leads to the second and most important part of the religious practice of the people, viz. the worship of Nyikang. This tradition runs thus: A white or rather greyish cow, *geasi aduk*, came out of the river; she brought forth a gourd; when this gourd split, a man and animals came forth out of it (vide page 178). The name of this man was *Kɛlɛ*; *Kɛlɛ* begat *Omarɛ*, who begat *Wat Mɛl* ("son of *Mɛl*"); *Wat Mɛl* begat Okwa. Okwa used to go to the riverside; here he met repeatedly two maidens who had come from out the water, they were very beautiful and had long hair, but the lower part of their bodies was like the form of a crocodile. One day Okwa seized the girls and carried them away. Their screams brought out their father, who till then had not been seen by Okwa. His face and the left side of his body were like human, but his right side was green of colour and had the form of a crocodile. When asked he declared his name to be *Odijil*, he protested against his daughters being taken away by force, but afterwards consented. Okwa married the girls. The names of the two maidens were *Nyakaye* and *Ongwat* (*Nakɛyɛ* and *Oiwat*). One of *Nyakaye*'s sons was *Nyikang*; according to some this was the eldest child, while others say he was the youngest. *Nyakaye* had more children beside *Nyikang*; of one son the name is known, he was *Ongi*; the names of her daughters are (according to A. E. S.) *Ad Dui*, *Ari Umkar*, and *Bunyung*. Okwa's second wife *Ongwat* gave birth to one son, *Ju* or *Buɛrɛ*. Okwa married

Migrations and History

LIII

the Funj language the word "bunj" means "Arab", i. e. stranger; the identity of this bunj with Shilluk bonj, Nuer fonj and the name Funj can hardly be doubted. Now Bruce gives the singular of the name by "fungo", and the plural "fungi". This is a pure Shilluk form; *g* being in Shilluk the ending of the noun in singular, and *i* that of the plural. The meaning of the word "fungo" Bruce renders by "free citizen". (R. Hartmann [Die Nigritier] identifies the word Funj with the Ptoemphanæ of the ancients, and moreover compares it with a great number of African names of similar sounding; but his deductions have not convinced me.)

The present Funj are a negro people living in Sennar. Their colour is dark, but somewhat lighter than that of the Shilluks; they are of a strong, tall figure, with thin legs. Both sexes wear most artful hair dresses. They have leather shields in form almost like those of the Shilluks; their fighting arms are swords and missiles. The huts of the Funj consist in round walls with conical roofs. Their chief occupation is agriculture, but they have also some cattle. They are clever in smelting and working iron and other metals.

Their religion is Islam, but the older records are unique in stating that at the end of the 15th century they were heathens, and even when Bruce was in the country, many pagan practices had survived; it almost seems that at that time the people still were in their hearts rather pagans than true followers of Islam, though the latter had long before become the official religion.

The Funj country, Dar Fung, stretches on both sides of the Blue Nile. Its present boundaries are: on the north, Jebels Gereiwa and Rera; on the east, Jebel Agadi and the Fazogli district. Southwards, it extends to the Abyssinian frontier, and including the district of Keili and the northern Burun country, extends westwards towards the Dinkas of the White Nile. In the days when the Fung were a great power of the Sudan, their country included parts of Abyssinia, and large districts west of the White Nile.

About the beginning of the 16th century the Funj appear in history. At this time they founded the kingdom of Sennar, which, from then till about the end of the 18th century, was governed by a Funj dynasty.

Since the early days of their history the Funj must have lived in some connection with the Shilluks. This fact is stated by all travellers and explorers who have been in the country and have written on the subject. Sir James Bruce, a distinguished English traveller and writer, who visited Sennar in 1770, asserts the identity of the Shilluks and Funj. In his Travels into Abyssinia he says that in 1504 a hitherto unknown negro nation, which had till then inhabited the western shores of the Bahr el Abiad about the 13° northern lat., landed in canoes in the Arab provinces of the Gezira; they defeated Wed Ageeb, the

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174 king of Sennar, and forced a treaty upon him by which the kingdom of Sennar
 101 became subject to the Funj, who subsequently took possession of the whole
 Gezira. "This negro nation is in their own country called Shillook".¹ In 1504
 Amru, the son of Adelan, who was the first of their regents, founded his mo-
 narchy on the eastern shores of the Blue Nile, and built Sennar, which ever
 since has been the capital. "From this period until the time of my sojourn
 (1770) 266 years had passed, during which twenty kings had reigned".² When
 the monarchy was founded, the king and the whole nation of the Shillook were
 pagans. Soon after they accepted Mohammedanism, and took the name Funji,
 which they sometimes translate by "lord" or "victor", and sometimes by "free
 citizen" but this term should be applied to those born east of the Bahr el
 Abiad only".

So the essence of James' report is this: The Funj are a portion of the
 Shilluk people, which, in the beginning of the 16th century, crossed the White
 Nile, conquered Sennar, founded a kingdom there, and henceforth were called and
 called themselves Funj. The source from which Bruce got this information, was
 the executioner of the royal court, whose chief office it was to put the king to
 death, as soon as in the opinion of the state ministers he was, from old age
 or on account of his misdoings, no more apt to govern the country. This same
 practice has been in use with the Shilluks up to the nearest past, with the sole
 difference that the Shilluk kings were strangled by their chief wife, not by an
 official. Bruce, having cured the executioner from a severe disease, gained the
 full confidence of this important person, who no doubt was well acquainted
 with the history of his people. Bruce also mentions the presence of Nubian
 (heathen) priests at the court of Sennar, who were, according to the executioner's
 statement, "great conjurers and sorcerers". From these Nubians Bruce heard
 of the "large mountains Tegla and Dyre" (= Jebel Tagale and Jebel Eliri in
 south-eastern Kordofan), from which their, the Nubians', forefathers had come
 into this country a long time ago, after they had been escaped there from a
 great flood.

According to the report given in The A. E. S. the rise of the kingdom of
 Sennar began in 1493. In that year Amara Dunkas (= Amru of Bruce?), the
 Sheikh of a sub-section of the Fung, either through the fortune of war or his
 superior capacity, succeeded in getting himself declared king of all the Fung
 tribes. These districts were inhabited by negroes belonging to the Nuba tribes,
 some of whom after the conquest remained in the country, while others emi-
 grated into the mountains of Fasogli and Kordofan. Those who remained, em-
 braced Islamism, intermarried with their conquerors, and, losing their language
 and nationality, were soon lost in the tribes known collectively under the name

¹ Bruce has never been in the Shilluk country, and had probably never before heard the name
 "Shilluk", he can only have learned it in Sennar from the natives.

² Thus the average reign of each king was a little more than thirteen years! vide above.

his lineage in the settlement and, if he is a representative of the dyil lineage, he will have a special status as representing the owners of the land and the jago will treat him tactfully. The hamlet headman has charge of affairs within his unit and represents his people in external affairs.

The Gol Leader

The owner of a homestead is responsible for the unmarried members of his gol, but has no special status. The correspondence between territorial divisions and their representatives may be charted as below. (After Pumphrey, S.N.R. 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.7.)

TERRITORIAL DIVISIONS

Shilluk Tribe
Luak & Gerr Provinces
Northern & Southern Marches

REPRESENTATIVE AUTHORITY

The Reth
Chiefs of Gol Nyikang & Gol Dhiang
Chiefs of Mumo & Tongu

.....Division (Luak).....Division or Court Chief.....

Settlement (*Poah*)
Hamlet (*Pac*)
Homestead (*Gol*)

Jago
Jal dwong pac
Jal (ol)

(Dotted line indicates permanent administrative divisions with chiefs made by the Anglo-Egyptian Government. Previously, there were no permanent intermediate territorial units between the two provinces and marches and the settlements.)

THE RETH'S POLITICAL POWER

The actual degree of power possessed by the reth has been a matter for dispute among anthropologists. The majority of the early writers stressed his power and authority. Seligman writes, "The Shilluk king is absolute head temporal and spiritual." (1) Westermann and others have said likewise. Evans-Pritchard and other recent writers suggest that in administrative matters, the reth is not so powerful.

The chiefs of settlements and the hamlet heads are confirmed in their offices by the reth. In no case, however, does he nominate them, for they are elected by the people of the units they represent in virtue of their positions as heads of lineages dominant in the area. Likewise the chiefs of the provinces and of the northern and southern marches are traditionally determined and persons who are eligible cannot be passed over for reasons of political expediency. On the other hand, the chiefs owe their reth certain duties and are responsible to him for the state of their districts and their inhabitants, for defence of the settlement area and for the collection of tribute. If there is a choice of candidates for any position, each having the necessary ability and lineage qualifications, it is conceivable that the reth might use his influence to have as chief the man most amenable to his wishes; otherwise he appears to have little chance of exerting influence on the choice of his local officials.

(1) Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, 1932, p.39.

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643 attempt to usurp the throne any time after killing the *reth*. The *reth*'s
 644 sons and the sons of previous *reths* are potential rivals and are not
 649 allowed within Fashoda at night. The *reth* takes precautions to avoid
 this danger. It is not known in which hut he sleeps and he is said to
 wander round at night looking for intruders. This practice of regicide
 no doubt accounts for the planting out of the *reth*'s sons from the time of
 their birth.

The Death of a Reth

649 The *reth* is considered to have some mystic connection with the world
 of nature, and the state of his health has an effect on the fertility of
 the land, on the rains, the harvests and on the general material and
 spiritual welfare of the people. If the *reth* becomes weak, the people
 suffer and he must be killed. If he were allowed to die naturally the
 spirit of Nyikang might be lost to the Shilluk for ever. There are a
 number of traditions relating to the traditional mode of death suffered by
 the *reth*. One maintains that the *reth* is strangled or suffocated by his
 wives if he shows signs of senility; another that he was walled up alive
 in a hut. The *reth* may be killed by a rival claimant to the throne at
 any time. Evans-Pritchard considers that the ceremonial putting to death
 of kings is probably a fiction; there is no historical evidence for it
 and some Shilluk kings seem to have reigned until they were quite old.
 Both Howell and Evans-Pritchard consider that there is a close connection
 between the tradition of killing the king, because of the bad effects of
 his waning vitality, and the tradition that a rival claimant should seize
 the throne ".... we must interpret Shilluk statements about the matter as
 indicating not that any prince may slay the king on his own initiative, as
 has been suggested, but that any prince may lead a rebellion as the candi-
 date of discontent, particularly of the part of the kingdom to which the
 prince belongs. If the king has lost support in the part to which he
 belongs he will probably lose also both the resulting contest and his life
 in it." (1) If this is so, the traditions of king-killing are perhaps an
 interpretation, couched in symbolic terms, of the actual course of events
 following a rebellion against the *reth*.

ELECTION AND INSTALLATION OF THE RETH

1147 Detailed descriptions of the installation of a new *reth* have been
 given - apart from information by Nornol - by Howell and Thomson who were
 649 in Shillukland at the election of King Fafiti Yor in 1943 and of his suc-
 cessor, King Anei in 1944. In the events described by them the political,
 ritual and symbolic nature of the *reth* and the importance of the Nyikang
 myths may be clearly seen. In addition, the relationships between the
 various social divisions and between the territorial and kinship segments
 may be perceived in action. The whole tribe participates in some degree,
 649 for a series of ceremonies is carried out by the clans, in which each has
 a special traditional role to play.

The interregnum is a period of danger, owing to the war which may
 break out over the choice of a successor and owing to the absence of the

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk*, 1948, pp.34-5.

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778 of the newly elected reth Nyikang and Duk are brought in procession from Akur to Fashoda with their priests to test the new reth.

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541 The conventional opposition between northern and southern divisions now becomes apparent. The forces of the southern provinces flock to support the reth-elect and wait at Debale settlement while Nyikang and his supporters assemble at Adodo. The two armies then march to Khor Arapajur and a mock battle takes place with millet stalks instead of spears. Nyikang captures the reth-elect and there is a procession to the shrine of Nyikang at Fashoda. Certain ceremonies of a mystic nature follow, which are not participated in by the whole people, as are the procession and battle. The image of Nyikang is placed on the royal stool, then the king-elect sits on it and the spirit of Nyikang is believed to enter into him, and possess him causing him to tremble.

A few days later a second mock battle occurs between the king's supporters and Nyikang. The reth is victorious, for Nyikang has taken possession of him and the effigy is now merely the symbol of Nyikang and no longer the repository of his spirit. In a final ceremony all the important chiefs and elders from all parts of Shillukland declare their allegiance to the new reth.

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643 The installation ceremonies of the reth and the traditions relating to Nyikang show how, at every point, the structure and political organisation of the Shilluk people is confirmed by ritual and by mystic symbols.

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64 All rebellions and revolts are directed against the king in person and not against the kingship itself. The unity of the Shilluk is such that the various segments of the country can be represented by the common symbol of the reth-ship. Nevertheless, there are powerful tendencies towards fission within the structure. As has been shown, the kingship is the subject of competition on the part of the nyireth candidates supported by chiefs and forces available from their territories.

171 Of all the Nilotic groups for which there is any considerable information, the Shilluk alone form a single political unit, or nation, as opposed to a number of separate tribes or tribal groups which are culturally similar but not politically unified. At the same time, the principles of their political structure and social organisation are similar in many respects to those of the rest of the Nilotes, in particular the Anuk.

AGE SETS

114 Apart from a brief mention by Hofmayr, the only information concerning the Shilluk age sets is contained in Howell's article in *Sudan Notes and Records*, 1941, Vol. XXIV.

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[88] On reaching puberty a Shilluk boy is initiated into the age-set organisation. A Shilluk age set is known as ric and is made up of three or more subdivisions each consisting of men of approximately the same age, who have herded cattle together as boys. A man always remains in the subdivision into which he has been initiated, but a periodical shuffling of the subdivisions alters their respective positions in an age set and the whole age-set organisation. A reorganisation of the groups of subdivisions

but the usual fine for making another man's wife pregnant consists of three cows and one bull; if pregnancy does not result the fine is two head of cattle. Fines for seduction are paid to the girl's father and vary from one to three head of cattle according to whether or not the girl is made pregnant. If a woman has committed adultery, she confesses it at the time of childbirth; her husband then exacts the appropriate fines from the men concerned.

If children have been born outside marriage the eventual husband may take them over and will pay extra bridewealth cattle. Failing this, they are brought up in the *gol* of their maternal uncle and belong to his clan. He will receive the bridewealth paid on the marriage of the girls. (1)

Widow Inheritance

According to Westernmann widows are inherited by the brothers of the dead husband or by his sons, who take the wives who are not their own mothers. He then adds that, if children are begotten from these wives, they belong to the family of the dead man and "they are like his own children." (2) This custom of raising up seed to the name of the dead man is general among the Nilotic tribal groups.

KINSHIP AND KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

(*ora*)

The in-law relationship of *ora* has been commented on by Seligman and Pumphrey. It appears to have two particular applications, being used in a narrow and in a wider sense.

A man describes as *ora* all his wife's kinsmen and, strictly, all the kinsmen of the wives of the men of his own generation belonging to his own clan. This extension may be because he is allowed, at any rate in theory, to have access to the wives of such clansmen and temporarily takes over the in-law relationship with their parents. During the first years of marriage the members of the husband's *gol* have to respect and to avoid the members of the wife's *gol*. Pumphrey suggests that the basic reason for this is that the initial period of marriage is an unstable one and friction is gradually resolved as the bridewealth is paid off and children are born. To avoid friction the husband does not speak to his *ora* and meets them as little as possible.

In a wider sense the *ora* tie is connected with certain sex taboos. The breach of these taboos is believed to cause *duale* sickness, a form of illness believed to affect both mother and child who will die unless the man who induced the mother to break the taboo will split a gourd in two and sacrifice a sheep. (3) There are certain *ora* relationships between lineages and one lineage will be *ora* to another. Thus, if men of lineage A have married women of lineage B, C and D, there are *ora* relationships between A and B; A and C; A and D. In such a case no men of lineages B, C and D

(1) Pumphrey, *J.N.E.* 1941, Vol. XXIV, pp. 34-5.

(2) Westernmann, *The Shilluk People*, 1912, p. 114.

(3) Pumphrey, *J.N.E.* 1941, Vol. XXIV, p. 79.

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THE SHILLUK OF THE UPPER NILE

By GODFREY LIENHARDT

121 THIS essay is based primarily on literary sources,¹ which contain unusually full references to the religious and cosmological ideas of the Shilluk. In places, I have reinterpreted earlier writings on the Shilluk in the light of my own knowledge of the related Dinka, and of other Nilotic studies. The concepts of these Nilotic peoples are alike in many ways, and the Shilluk and Dinka have for long been considered as related, from the point of view of anthropological theory, by the presence among them both of different forms of the institution of 'divine kingship', studied by Frazer and Seligman.² Upon this institution much of their interpretation of the universe and of their own place in it depend.

771 Lack of definition and dogma in their religion and cosmology makes it 777 possible for Nilotic peoples to accept many different versions of their mythology and history, and also permits some syncretism of belief. I do not consider here speculations about the possible influences of ancient Egypt, the Fung, Islam, or the early monophysite Christianity of the Sudan, on Shilluk belief.³ It is, in fact, remarkable that contact with foreign peoples and ideas, over a long period, should have left so little mark on Shilluk thought. Some of the stories which Hofmayr⁴ attributes to Christian influence are widely known among other Nilotic peoples and elsewhere, in places farther removed from probable contact with Christianity. Lack of 772 formal definition of beliefs and notions about the universe also makes the 124 study of Shilluk cosmology necessarily a study based on inferences from 773 mytha, hymns, and other texts, collected piecemeal from informants, none of 774 whom can speak with any final authority. It is clear that Shilluk cosmology 775 is not present to the mind of any one Shilluk as a single, orthodox system, 776 abstracted from the narrative flow and imaginative detail of myth. Even one 777 man may tell slightly different versions of the same story,⁵ for the telling is

¹ References throughout are to the Shilluk bibliography appended, the dates being the dates of the publications cited. Some of the sources contain many texts in the Shilluk language, and where these are translated into a language other than English, I have given an English version after examining the Shilluk text. I should like to thank all writers on the Shilluk, upon whose observations this summary and representation entirely depend. Their publications, however, are not all easily accessible, nor are they specifically concerned with the analysis of the Shilluk ideas here studied. This must be my excuse for writing about a people of great ethnological interest and importance, who have already been described in detail by writers who have known them well.

² J. G. Frazer, 1911. C. G. Seligman, 1911, C. G. and B. Z. Seligman, 1932.

³ Discussion of Shilluk contacts with some of these will be found in W. Hofmayr, 1925, and D. Westermann, 1932. For general cultural and conceptual similarities between ancient Egypt and negro Africa, the reader may be referred to C. G. Seligman, 1934, and H. Frankfort, 1948, among others.

⁴ 1925, pp. 193-6, the stories of a fall of man, and of a woman's bearing a god.

⁵ D. S. Oyster, 1918 (1).

105 Linguistically, the Shilluk belong to the Luo-speaking people, amongst whom are also the Anuak of the Baro and Fibar rivers between the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Ethiopia, the Lango and Acholi of Uganda, the Alur of Uganda and the Belgian Congo, and many scattered groups in the Bahr-el-Ghazal Province of the Sudan, of whom the Luo (Jur) are the most important. Some of these claim some slight contact, in comparatively recent times, with the Shilluk kingdom. Amongst the Luo-speakers the Shilluk are unique in their possession of a single royal dynasty, in relation to which all are members of one Shilluk kingdom, with well-defined territorial and social limits. By this also they are chiefly set apart from the other Nilotic negroes, the Nuer and Dinka, with whom they otherwise have much in common in physique, character, and culture. Perhaps more than the other Nilotes, the Shilluk have for long been in intermittently hostile contact with foreign enemies and foreign governments. The traveller Schweinfurth, who visited them in 1869, says that at that time little or nothing remained of the original condition of the Shilluk, who of all Nilotic negroes 'used to uphold the most perfectly regulated government', which, he says, can only be properly appreciated by reference to the registers of the expedition of Mohammed Ali earlier in the century.¹ We cannot now know what the Shilluk were really like at that time, and it is certain that some of their indigenous custom, particularly that concerning the election and disposal of the Shilluk king, has been interfered with to such an extent that the Shilluk themselves are uncertain about some details of the old belief and practice. Nevertheless, until the present day the Shilluk have retained a consciousness of their national identity and integrity, and have been slow to modify their ideas to accord with those of the various strangers in their land. The main features of their social structure remain, and under the present government, versions of their ceremonies for the funeral and installation of the king have been carefully observed and described.² Enough of the traditional practice and belief remains, and has been recorded, to make unnecessary too much speculative reconstruction of the Shilluk past; unfortunately the absence of historical records makes it impossible to study the development of the kingship, which might explain some apparent anomalies in accounts of the present situation.

Social Organization

614 105 The Shilluk are divided, on the basis of descent traced in the male line, into about 100 different descent groups, which have been called both clans and lineages. They are exogamous, and some of them, at least, are totemically affiliated with natural or artificial species of various kinds. Members of these descent groups may be found living in any part of Shilluk country, and the main groups are themselves dispersed in smaller groups throughout Shilluk country. The largest descent groups are without any corporate existence.

¹ G. Schweinfurth, 1873, p. 93.

² P. Munro, 1918, and Howell and Thomson, 1946.

173 behaviour. Although there are many Shilluk names by which non-Nilotic
 186 foreigners may be distinguished from each other, they are also classed to-
 829 gether as *obwonyo* (foreigners), a word also used for a reddish millet,¹ and
 as such they are distinguished collectively from Nilotic peoples who are
 not included in this category. The Nuba (*dongo* or *dhong*)² seem to occupy
 a special position among foreigners, for Nyikang himself established a
 relationship with them by marrying his daughter to a Nuba.

As the Shilluk see it, the other Nilotes were separated from them in the
 course of a common history. To explain the presence and dominance of
 173 foreigners from outside their Nilotic world, they have stories of a meta-
 physical kind, positing some special act of God. These stories have clearly
 been invented in recent times for purely explanatory purposes. Shilluk
 186 interest in foreigners, as shown in myth and song, centres primarily on the
 way in which they have been opposed by Nyikang and the Shilluk, and the
 more they can be subordinated to Nyikang, the more they are assimilated
 to Shilluk tradition. Thus, it seems that the fighting with the invaders of
 their country in fairly recent times has, for the Shilluk, little of the imagina-
 tive significance which they attach to superficially trivial incidents in the
 147 lives of their early kings. If Hofmayr's derivation³ of the word *obwonyo*
 (foreigner) is correct, the Shilluks' first national enemy, whom Nyikang
 urged them to resist, gave their name to others who followed. Nyikang
 and his successors, the Shilluk kings, are thought to have been the leaders
 of opposition to such national enemies. Nyikang both relates the Shilluk
 to other Nilotes whom they know, and focuses their hostility to attacks on
 their national integrity and exclusiveness. He represents, in this and other
 ways which may later be considered, the specifically Shilluk way of life and
 thought.

The Order of the World and Society

723 The order of Shilluk society is best approached by a consideration of the
 myths of migration under Nyikang, for some features of Shilluk society are
 thought to have originated in that period. Some of the details of these
 myths cannot be fully understood without a preliminary knowledge of the
 main natural divisions of the Shilluk world. Writers on the Shilluk do not
 report any story of an original state of chaos, in the strict sense, when man,
 earth, and sky were together in one undifferentiated whole, though such
 stories exist among the Dinka. There are Shilluk stories which do seem to
 suggest that at one time the world was not differentiated as it now is. For

¹ J. A. Heasty, 1937; Westermann, 1912, p. 248, transliterates the word for red millet slightly differently from the word for foreigners. Hofmayr, 1925, says that the word is derived from *ya-puny*, the name originally given by the Shilluk to the Fung, with whom they were in early contact. Another word for the Fung, said to include the people of Sennar generally, is *cai*.

² Heasty, 1937, *et al.* *Dongo* probably means 'hill-people'. In a hymn quoted by Hofmayr 1925, p. 7, the Fung or the people of Sennar are referred to as *dongo cai*.

³ See note 1.

631 Luak in the south, which, in some situations, are politically opposed to each
 793 other. These territorial and political divisions are associated, but not coterminous, with two religious divisions which Howell and Thomson call 'sees'.¹ One of these is called Gol Dhiang, and corresponds to the province of Ger and northern Shilluk-land. The other is called Gol Nyikang, and corresponds to Luak and southern Shilluk-land, which Nyikang first settled. These two religious divisions are separated by a stream or inlet of the river, the ceremonial crossing of which by the king-elect forms part of the ceremonies at his installation. The theme of crossing the river, already referred to, is thus repeated in the installation ceremonies for the Shilluk king, and we find elsewhere how important in Shilluk thought is the crossing from one bank to another. There is, for example, a riddle, the ideas contained in which must seem curious to those for whom the separation of the banks of a river does not have such imaginative value. The riddle asks 'What is a big man, who knows only one bank?' and the answer is 'an island'. Hofmayr explains that an island, unlike the river or the stream, has only one bank.² There can thus be no crossing from bank to bank.

631 Ger and Luak each comprise a number of districts, which are the loose
 616 confederacies already mentioned, and seem to have been much modified by Turkish and British rule. It is clear, however, that in the past the really important divisions of Shilluk-land were the religious moieties, Gol Dhiang and Gol Nyikang, and that the boundary between them was the inlet of the river, called Arepejur, which is said to mean 'the gathering of the peoples'. Each of these moieties was divided into settlements. Of these settlements, some of which have given their names to the administrative districts to which they now belong, four were of special traditional importance. These were Muomo and Tonga, guarding the northern and southern marches, and the two settlements divided by the stream Arepejur and facing each other across the boundary between the moieties. The leaders of these latter settlements represented their whole moieties in the election of the Shilluk king, so that in this situation the leader of one settlement was also the leader of Gol Nyikang, and the leader of the other was also the leader of Gol Dhiang.³ Just north of the boundary between Gol Nyikang and Gol Dhiang, and therefore technically in the northern moiety Gol Dhiang, is the present royal capital, Fashoda. The king's clan seems to be well represented on both sides of the boundary between these moieties.

In describing the Shilluk divisions of their country, it is easy to introduce the notion of an administrative system, with an element of superordination and subordination in the relations between the larger territorial units and

¹ Howell, and Thomson, 1946, p. 75.

² Hofmayr, 1925, p. 402.

³ The history of the boundary between northern and southern Shilluk-land has been very confused. The details of this confusion do not affect Shilluk cosmology. Some of the information here given is from Pumphrey, 1941, but the main analysis of the significance of the religious moieties is taken from the way they functioned at the installation of the King Anei Kur, recorded by Howell and Thomson, 1946, and from the analysis given in Evans-Pritchard, 1948.

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should understand the more abstract notion, God, by the less abstract, Nyikang. A still clearer example of the approximation of Nyikang to God in Shilluk thought is to be found in a prayer, part of which runs:

We praise you, you who are God. Protect us, we are in your hands, and protect us, save me. You and Nikawng, you are the ones, who created, . . . and it is you Nikawng, who are accustomed to assist God to save, and it is you who give the rain. The sun is yours, and the sea (river) is yours, you who are Nikawng . . . The cow (for sacrifice) is here for you, and the blood will go to God and you.¹

Here also may be seen the attribution to Nyikang of control of the sun and the river which, along with the rain mentioned in the first prayer, are the features of the Shilluk world upon which their prosperity ultimately depends, and which may help or ruin them.

God, Nyikang, and the Shilluk kings seem to form a continuum in the Shilluk religious system. Nyikang is thus sometimes called *juok piny* (*piny* being earth or world) while God is either simply *juok*, or *juok mal*, God above. The Shilluk king, the representative of Nyikang, is chosen ultimately by God, as he is accepted and possessed proximately by Nyikang. A long Shilluk epic begins with the lines 'Nyikang joined with God, the election was held . . .', the election being that of King Kur.² There are reports of a form of election slightly different from that described earlier in this essay. In Hofmayr's account the king-elect is agreed upon by the electors much in the way described, but Nuba from Liri, with whom Nyikang formed a relationship, are said to come with pebbles, which represent those who have a right to succeed. These pebbles, one of which has been prepared beforehand to represent the chosen candidate, are thrown into the fire, and the pebble representing the king-elect turns red, or white, or red and white. Red stands for prosperity in cattle, white for good crops. The chosen prince is then challenged to fight at night and, if he acquits himself well, he is told that he is a brave man, and that God has decreed that he shall be king of the Shilluk. The installation ceremonies then proceed. At one point in them, when the king-elect enters the village of Debalo on his way to the capital at Fashoda, the chief of Debalo asks him, 'What do you want here?' and the king-elect replies, 'I am the man sent by God to rule the land of the Shilluk'.³ Despite the election there is thus a 'fiction' that it is God who chooses the Shilluk king and is the ultimate support of the Shilluk kingship. The order of the Shilluk kingdom depends upon Nyikang and the king, and Nyikang and the king derive their positions from God.

The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk

The connexion between God and Nyikang is of great importance in defining the sort of 'divine kingship' which is the central feature of the Shilluk

¹ Oyster, 1918, (ii) p. 283.

² Hofmayr, 1935, p. 431.

³ Hofmayr, 1935, pp. 145 ff. Westermann, (1912, p. 123) gives an account of yet another form of election, in which sticks are placed in a fire, the one which flames most representing the king-elect.

776 cosmological system. *Juok* and Nyikang are the most general explanatory concepts the Shilluk have, *juok* or God accounting for the existence and nature of reality, and Nyikang for the way in which the Shilluk order and interpret it. Though Nyikang may be called *juok piny* (God below) he does not represent the totality of what the concept of God means to the Shilluk. God is also apprehended in other ways, and is addressed as God the Protector, God the Giver, God the Creator, and by other titles which correspond to the various situations in which the Shilluk need to invoke him, or explain effects which they attribute to him. *Juok* is thus a common explanation for illness, for the Shilluk seem to use this word to account for what is unknown in its nature but experienced in its effects.

[753] The Shilluk God is the final explanation both for what is good and what is evil, from a human point of view, but he is not himself good or evil. Howell describes him as 'a remote and amoral deity . . . present to a greater or lesser degree in all things',¹ and there are many indications in the literature that it would be a mistake to understand, by the Shilluk word for God, a being which could be defined in ethical terms. It is well, in discussing Shilluk ideas, to distinguish their ethical from their religious conceptions; for though Nyikang is the foundation of and sanction for Shilluk customary behaviour, and God is the support of Nyikang, in neither case is there any emphasis on intrinsic ethical qualities. Nyikang is not the teacher or founder of an ethical system, and the attributes which he shares with God refer, not to judgements of ethical value, but to the nature of reality and its interpretation. In the biographies of the Shilluk kings their traditional reputations are not mainly founded upon whether they were just or virtuous, but upon whether the Shilluk prospered under them, whether they were effective in war, whether they were brave, and whether they were clever. Their caprices are also remembered.

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Nyikang and Dak were the most important Shilluk kings and may be regarded as models of what the ideal Shilluk king should be. Some account of their lives has already been given, but it has perhaps not been made clear that the stories recorded of them emphasize their intrigues, deceptions, and intelligence, and the craftiness which seems for the Shilluk to be a sign of the particular gifts of God. Thus, in the story of the attempt by Dimo to kill Dak, when Nyikang made the effigy which was speared in Dak's stead, it is said that Dimo said 'Nyikang is a fool, but Dak is full of talk', which means, says Oyler, that Dak was a man of ideas. He also says that Nyikang 'was an inventor, and many of the things in everyday use . . . were first made by Nyikang'. In their contests with Dimo, Nyikang and Dak show themselves both more powerful and cleverer, and in this cleverness they are alike. Dak particularly, the son who effectively succeeds his father and is second in importance only to Nyikang himself, is shown to be not only

¹ Howell and Thomson, 1946, p. 8.

² Oyler, 1918 (I), p. 108. In this account, it is said that Dak made the effigy, though in other accounts, e.g. Westermann, 1912, p. 159, Nyikang made the effigy.

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mischievous and aggressive, but also a trickster who (vainly) attempts to deceive his father for his own advantage.¹ Westermann² quotes a text in which Nyikang commends a liar (perhaps a licensed jester), and another in which it is made clear that it was Dak's cunning which resulted in the catching of one of the creatures, described as a *juok*, with which the Shilluk kingdom was originally built up. The traditions of the Shilluk kings recorded by Hofmayr give details of their duplicity and cunning, their military prowess, and their cruelty and caprice. In this way they are approximated to God for these, and particularly intelligence and knowledge, are qualities by which a man manifests the power of God in him. The very nature of the election to the Shilluk kingship gives an advantage to the clever, as well as to the ruthless and brave, and the office must constantly have offered opportunities for intrigue and homicide. These features of 'divine kingship' tend to be somewhat elided in European accounts of the sacred character of the office, but some of the interest of the Shilluk kingship lies in the fact that the sort of sacredness it represents is little associated with an ethical code. Nyikang and the kings, along with God, are nevertheless for the Shilluk the sanctions for the customary rules and norms of behaviour. Thus the sanction for the customary moral order of Shilluk society is not conceived primarily in ethical terms, but as a manifestation of successful power and intelligence. So the test of kingship is success in the widest sense, and an unsuccessful king is soon killed by his rivals or disposed of by his retainers.³

Social Values: Cleverness and Success

That intelligence and success are attributed to the favour of God may be seen in other ways. Spirits, or those who are divinely inspired, are shown in Shilluk stories to be both clever and successful. They know more than others, and they can turn this knowledge to their own advantage. The Shilluk *ajuogo* (diviners), whose power is said to come from *juok*, are such people, and Oyler says of them that 'the Shilluks think of the witch-doctors or medicine men as good, not because their lives are good, nor yet because their practice is good, but because they are looked upon as the channels through which occult powers may be transmitted to men'.⁴ They are personally prosperous because they are necessary, and they are necessary because they know better than ordinary men how to achieve success; such a divinely inspired person may therefore be approached for help in stealing

¹ Hofmayr, 1925, p. 61.
A cow, for example.

² 1912, p. 166.

³ I have deliberately omitted any discussion of the killing of the Shilluk king, which by some authorities is said to be a ritual putting to death when the king's powers fail. The evidence for this is very confusing; in the records of the kings given by Hofmayr (1925), some clearly have died or been killed without ceremonial. It is difficult to reconcile this with the suggestion made by some authorities that the killing of the king is a ritual act performed to maintain the fertility and vitality of the land, cattle, and people, and that the ceremonial killing is believed to be essential for this, though misfortune for the whole land may later be attributed to some inadequacy in the funeral rites.

⁴ Oyler, 1920.

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The Shilluk, owing to their geographical conditions, are more sedentary than the other Nilotic tribes, and there is no great transhumance as among the others. They also are more intent on cultivation, Dura (*sorghum vulgare*) being the chief crop. They use a shifting cultivation technique; a certain plot of land is cultivated from four to six years and then left for ten to twelve years. An agricultural authority (5) on the Sudan said that "cotton as a cash crop began in 1923. But the Shilluk as well as the other Nilotes, are poor cultivators. The biggest crop of cotton in a twenty year period was 760 tons of raw cotton, mainly from the Shilluk land. It was abandoned and sesame began to take on importance because the country consumes a fairly large amount of sesame oil."

According to the latest census available there are about 80,000 Shilluk. (6)

Anthropometrics

During my stay in the Shilluk land I have taken anthropometric measurements on forty persons - 34 men, 11 of whom are members of the Shilluk royal family, and 6 women, one of whom is also royal. The persons were all measured at Malakal Town, but they were from different parts of the Shillukland, covering the whole area from north to south. Naturally I have a greater percentage of people representing the central area, i.e. around Malakal, and the percentage decreases northwardly and southwardly. Here is a list of the villages and settlements to which my subjects belong:

Akurua, Nun, Pabin (Dotwok district), Achop, Alol, Achag (north of Kodok), Kodok, Gobbany, Lal, Nyingar, (near Lal) Padit (near eastern Jau), Aolo, Bouky (n.w. Malakal), Oged-Butu (eastern bank), Pemath, Warjok, Kago, Fokan, Nyin-yar, Burr, Tonga, Atar und Nyijok.

I have taken the following measurements following the points described and defined in "Notes and Queries in Anthropology." (7)
Head length and breadth, nose length and breadth, facial and upper facial heights, stature and sitting height. On 8 of the men measured I recorded also the minimal frontal breadth and the bizygomatic breadth.

The tools I used were the sliding and spreading calibres, and the Anthropometer.

The results of my measurements are nearly identical with those of Professor Seligman (8) in both cephalic and facial indices and stature, but there is a considerable difference in the nasal index which I am not able to explain.

"a" Seligman (21)	C.I.	N.I.	P.I.	S.(cm)
	71.3	93.9	85.2	177
Riad (34)	71.6	85.5	84.5	177.2

From the distribution of the physical characters in different parts of the Shillukland - 12 of the men measured by us are from Gerr (northern Shilluk province), and 22 men are from Luak (southern Shilluk province) - we got a very astonishing result; it revealed that the Shilluk are not a homogeneous people as far as cephalic index and stature are concerned.

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	C.I.	N.I.	S. (cm)
141 "B" Gerr Prov. (12)	72.2	84.7	178.6
565 Luak " (22)	71.1	86.4	176.8

This is further and clearly illustrated from the measurements taken only on the Cole (any common Shilluk other than the members of the royal family and the Ororo members):

	C.I.	N.I.	S. (cm)
"C" Gerr Prov. (6)	73.3	85.5	178.5
Luak " (17)	71.7	85.0	174.5

Here the differences are shown more clearly than those in table "B" in which royal members were included. This means that the royal members have had, so to say, a compromising effect on the indices and further it means that the royal members have different anthropometric qualities. This is shown in table "D".

	C.I.	N.I.	S. (cm)
Royals (11)	70.8	85.9	178.9
Cole (23)	72.5	85.2	176.5

Also there is a tendency among the royal family members to differentiate physically, in north and south. This may be seen clearly in table "E".

	C.I.	N.I.	S. (cm)
Gerr (6)	71.1	83.9	178.7
Luak (5)	70.5	87.9	179.2

The mean indices for the 6 women were:

	C.I.	N.I.	S. (cm)
Cole (5)	72.1	86.1	162.9
Royal (1)	70.22	85.1	165.7

Here we also see the difference between commoners and nobles, though the number of samples is not sufficient to stand by itself. We depend here on the results of the 34 men measured to state that difference of physical character occurs also among Shilluk women.

Now here are some notes on the foregoing tables, to sum up, for the time being, a hurried conclusion liable to alteration if new anthropometric studies on the Shilluk and related tribes are undertaken in the future.

1. The difference in the Nasal index in table "A" may be attributed to differences in the points of measurement between Professor Seligman and me, unless Seligman has taken his samples from a certain area in the Shillukland. If this happens to be the case, it is most probable that the majority of his samples were taken from southern Shillukland in general, and the districts of Tonga and Manyikang specifically, because my samples in this area show the highest nasal indices recorded as shown in table "G" below.
2. The considerable differences between north and south, shown in tables "B" and "C", are a matter of the first degree of importance. This is the first time, as far as I know, that this difference has been brought to light. And its importance is not a self-contained racial matter, but is accentuated by Shilluk mythology in which North and South stand opposed to each other as two political units and in certain times as two religious units.

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Card No	C.I.	N.I.	F.I.	U.F.I.	S.(cm)	incisors	marks L R B A	dots	C.I.	N.I.	S
B 7	73.6	88.0			180.8		+	26			
C 8	73.4	96.2			175.1		+				
D 7	67.0	88.7	87.7	49.6	174.6	+	+	28	+		
B 1	71.3	87.7			184.8		+	21			
D 9	67.4	79.2	93.0	50.4	181.1		+	31			
	75.5	87.9			179.2						
D 3	70.2	85.1			165.7	+	+				

The sign + means that the people practice knocking out lower incisors, or body marks.

L = Left upper arm
and shoulder

R = right upper arm
and shoulder

B = Back
A = Abdomen

--- minimum

--- maximum

Tribal Marks.

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The most important tribal mark among the Shilluk is one row of dots or scars on the forehead called TAI which extends from near the ear to the other ear, crossing the temples. The old generations have three rows of these dots. (12) Butt writes that "Shilluk men and women have three to five rows of dots or scars....(13) but I was unable to discover any Shilluk man or woman who had these five rows of TAI. Butt may have confused this scarification with that of the Nuor and the Dinka who make five to seven deep cuts on the forehead. A profile of a Shilluk man or woman will betray a strong resemblance to someone who has a necklacc of black or brown beads stretched across his forehead. These dots are of no fixed number. (14) They vary according to the breadth of the face and the forehead. No Shilluk is exempted from this mark, but in my study I found one old fellow from the royal family (15) who happened to be born in Metema, north of Khartoum, as his mother was taken captive during the Mahdi - Shilluk war. He lived about twenty years in the north, then he came home, even having lost his Shilluk tongue. He had no TAI.

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The most important tribal mark is the knocking out of the lower incisors. Seligmann wrote (16) that the royal offshoots till the fourth generation "... follow the royal practice of retaining their lower central incisors instead of having them knocked out as commoners do..." Butt also says: "Among the Shilluk the royal family alone keep their teeth intact." (17) From the results I have obtained and illustrated in table "G" we can make two observations:

- that not all commoners practice the knocking out of their incisors,
 - that some royal members practice it.
- The Shilluk told me that this practice was universal among the commoners in the past, but now it is practiced at will. The old belief was that the failure to knock out teeth caused sickness. It must have been contact with the Arabs that changed this belief, and with this contact the habit is going to die out.

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Other body marks are also made at will and have no religious significance. The people say that it is nice to have these marks on the body, especially for young men and women and for dancing festivals. These marks take many forms - scorpion, tiger, geometrical designs, or even military signs, especially that of a sergeant on the upper arm.

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177Clothes.

Hofmayer states that "... So gross die Aufmerksamkeit und Vorliebe für Putz und Schmuck, so gering die Sorge für die Kleider." (18) He also writes: "Während der Mann im Shilluklande fast immer ohne Kleidung ging, stand es mit dem Weibe in dieser Hinsicht anders." (19) and "Langsam begannen nun auch unter diesem Volke, seitdem christliche Kultur und Religion ins Land gezogen ist, Anzeichen einer besseren Zeit sich einzustellen. Bereits kann man die Nacktheit der Shilluk von diesem Ende als verschwunden betrachten." (20) During my sojourn among the Shilluk I noticed one great difference among the Shilluk and the other Nilotic tribes, this being that the Shilluk were always dressed - at towns as well as in their own villages, children being the only exception - and others were not. Their dress is called in their own tongue LAUD, and consists of a piece of cloth of any colour, but mainly white. The LAUD is placed round the body, so that it reaches down to the knees and is knotted in a special way on the left shoulder by men (21) and the right shoulder by women. Women also wear some other underclothing which is well described by Hofmayer. (22) But the question is that the LAUD is a standard Shilluk dress; it is neither European nor Arabic from the northern Sudan. It stands unique and the Nuer or the Dinka, who are supposed to have some kinship with the Shilluk, go, men and women, quite naked. Hofmayer's statement, as quoted above, was written in 1925. It is quite impossible that the Shilluk have altered one of the most important habits over a period of 30 or 50 years, taking into account the extremely conservative spirit which all authors attribute to the Shilluk and other Nilotes. Secondly, if the Shilluk men began to dress due to the introduction of Christian culture and religion, they would have adopted the European dress. (23) rather than invent a new type of dress foreign to both missionaries and Moslems. Or, if this were due to Christian culture, why did it not produce the same effect among the Dinka and Nuer, among whom comparatively more missionary work has been done than among the Shilluk? Hofmayer contradicts himself in the same book. Cal, the second Shilluk king, who lived about 1580 A.D., before he died, washed himself, and "Nach vollendeter Waschung kleidete Cal sich an." (24). This means that the Shilluk used to dress themselves from the beginning of their known history.

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I have also no knowledge of a society in which the differences between the two sexes go, or went, as far as that which we could understand from Hofmayer's description, i.e. men go naked while women have a complicated dress system composed of two pieces for the unmarried and of three pieces for the married. [7]

There is also a traditional ceremony of importance in the Shilluk political organisation. Every new chief of a settlement, which is a combined group of lineage hamlets, has to be confirmed in his post by the king. This takes the form of investing the new chief with a LAUD with the king "personally knotting this robe over the jugo's (chief) shoulder" (25). In a similar manner, the chief of a hamlet (a lineage group, homesteads in a settlement) may be invested with a LAUD "directly from the king, or from the settlement" may be

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[18] "such great attention and predilection for dress and ornamentation, so little care for the children"

[19] "While the men in Shilluk country almost always went without clothing, the women behaved differently in this respect."

[20] slowly in the beginning, but since that time Christian culture and religion has also penetrated among these people, a sign that a better time is coming. Already one can see that the nakedness of the Shilluk is disappearing from this country."

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- 29/ invested with a LAUO, "directly from the King, or from the settlement chief."
 62/ (26) This ceremony shows clearly that the LAUO plays a symbolic role in the
 643 Shilluk political institutions. (27) These institutions are more or less matters
 of tradition, and traditions are rarely changed in a conservative society.

29/ I have dwelt at length upon this problem, not only to criticize
 Hofmayer, but mainly to direct attention to one of the most important cultural
 characteristics of the Shilluk, in comparison with other Nilotic groups, and
 to show that this is not a newly acquired custom, but has deep roots in the past
 that can be explained by cultural contact or diffusion that affected only the
 Shilluk.

Notes.

- 113 (1) Seligman, C.G. & B. Z.; Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan. London 1932
 P.40
 (2) Hofmayer, W., Die Shilluk, Wien 1925. p 247.
 [63] (3) The word means the "meeting-place of the people".
 (4) Tothill, J.D., Agriculture in the Sudan, London 1948. p.815
 (5) Ibid, pp. 820/821
 (6) Ibid, p. 812
 (7) Seligman, B. Notes and Queries in Anthropology, London.
 (8) "C.G., Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan, London 1932, p 13
 (9) Hofmayer W., Die Shilluk, Wien 1925. p 19
 (10) Seligman, C.G., Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, No 11
 London 1916, pp. 516/517
 The figures in brackets indicate the number of persons measured.
 (11) Seligman, C.G., Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan, London 1932, p. 418
 (12) see above, Table "G" No A 4, and A 1, have three lines.
 (13) Butt A., 1952, p 28
 (14) see above, table "G"
 (15) see above, table "G", card No B 3, he was the son of King Yor, who adopted
 the name of Omar, and converted to Islam.
 (16) Seligman C.G., Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan, London 1932, p 49
 (17) Butt, A., 1952, p 28
 (18) Hofmayer, W., Die Shilluk, Wien 1925. p 344
 (19) Ibid, p. 345
 (20) Ibid, p. 345
 [114] (21) This may be explained by the wish to let the right arm always free to throw
 spears or anything else. Also Seligman (1932, p 43) erred when he said that
 "the inhabitants of a village, Pothour, mark a scorpion several inches in
 length... on the shoulder - left for men and right for women- so that it is
 not hidden by the shoulder cloth."
 (22) Hofmayer, W., 1925, p 345/346
 [77] (23) This is the case I have observed; the Shilluk who comes under the influence
 797] of missions or who was converted to Christianity uses European shirts
 and shirts, and the Shilluk who was converted to Islam wears the usual Arab white
 dress, with a turban.
 (24) Hofmayer, W., 1925. p 39
 (25) Butt, A., The Nilotes of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Uganda, London 1925.
 p. 30
 (26) Ibid, p 30
 [77] (27) There is a similar ceremony among the Fung of investing the new chiefs with
 a head dress.

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OBSERVATIONS ON THE SHILLUK OF THE UPPER NILE

CUSTOMARY LAW: MARRIAGE AND THE VIOLATION OF RIGHTS IN WOMEN

P. P. HOWELL

175 IN a previous article on the Shilluk¹ I discussed the laws of homicide and the legal
 648 and ritual functions of the *riik* or King. An interpretation of Shilluk law and authority is not easy because, apart from early contacts with the peoples of the northern Sudan, they have been subjected to external influences and some kind of Government since the early years of the last century. These contacts began with cursory and not altogether happy encounters with the Turco-Egyptian Government which were followed by the establishment of a provincial headquarters at Kodok in 1867 under the authority of a *mudir*; later came the turbulent and dismal years of the *Mahdia* and finally the occupation by the present Government in 1898. It would be
 177 idle to suppose that the political system of the Shilluk has remained unaffected by these influences. The Shilluk are by reputation an exceptionally conservative people and certainly the effects of their relations with outsiders are, to the casual observer, hard to detect. Profound changes have taken place none the less, especially in the sphere of customary law, and these changes are undoubtedly gathering momentum.

671 By 'law' I mean simply those customary rules governing human relationships
 692 from which there has developed a body of rules classed as 'customary law' (sometimes 'native law and custom') administered under the Chiefs' Court Ordinance of
 [648] 1931, and more or less consistently applied in the tribunals established by the Government.

These courts have now largely taken the place of the ultimate sanction for conformity with accepted rules of conduct, for the fulfilment of recognized duties and the composition of all disputes, which was formerly the resort to force by the injured party and his supporters. It is my opinion that the ordered indigenous administrative system of the Shilluk, so enthusiastically described by some writers, and the organized repressive measures alleged to have been undertaken by the *riik*, are not only exaggerated, but also, in part, derive from contacts with alien governments. At any rate it is more than probable that no system existed among the Shilluk whereby all wrongs were righted by the direct intervention of the *riik* and his representatives.

671 We are not here concerned with political systems, but with the nature of customary law as it is applied today. This law is at basis derived from customary procedures in which arbitration and compromise prevailed; but in recent years it has
 [648] acquired a consistency, and in some cases a rigidity, probably unknown in the past. A body of case law has arisen from precedents made in the courts, and although some laws may derive from the direct intervention of the Administration, others are part of a purely spontaneous process. It is also noticeable that many claims now upheld

[113] ¹ 'Observations on the Shilluk of the Upper Nile: The laws of homicide and the legal functions of the *riik*.' *Africa*, xii. 2, 1932. I am again indebted to

the Sudan Government for permission to quote from official reports and to Mr. W. P. G. Thomson and Mr. J. L. Baker for comments and suggestions.

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 621 localized lineage within one settlement is certainly exogamous and there is also a bar
 613 to marriage into the maternal lineage. The clan, widely distributed in minor branches
 582 throughout Shilluk country, does not function as a corporate unit except at times of
 614 national festivals and then only in the sphere of ceremonial and ritual.

MARRIAGE AND MARRIAGE LAWS

- 171 As with the Nuer and Dinka, marriage among the Shilluk is achieved by the per-
 583 formance of recognized social procedures and the payment of bridewealth in the
 233 form of cattle, sheep, and goats. Nowadays, cash may be paid in addition to or in
 [177] lieu of cattle, but not frequently and not in large sums.¹ It must be emphasized from
 the start that the Shilluk do not possess anything like the number of cattle owned by
 the Nuer and Dinka,² and for this reason alone the number of beasts paid as bride-
 wealth is lower. Among the Nuer and Dinka the average ranges from fifteen to forty
 head of cattle according to the prevailing condition of the herds. Among the Shilluk
 the number is fixed at ten head, and although there have been times when few Shilluk
 were able to pay this number, it has been retained rigidly for several generations
 despite attempts by the Administration to reduce it. With sheep and goats, which
 are paid in addition but do not have the same significance, there is no such rigidity.
 The number of these seems to vary according to the attractions of the bride, though
 prevailing economic conditions doubtless play their part.

- 114 There is much to be found on the subject of marriage in the writings of Hofmayr,
 127 Westermann, and Seligman,³ though many statements are misleading. This summary
 account of Shilluk marriage laws is based largely on the writings, both published and
 unpublished, of M. E. C. Pumphrey⁴ who not only took into account previous
 literature but, as an administrator in Shilluk country for several years, had better
 opportunities to investigate the legal aspect of the subject. These are supplemented
 by my own direct observations.⁵

The Social Processes and Legality of Marriage

- 58 Pumphrey says:

The marriage tie creates an obligation to pay cattle, but it is not created by or dependent upon such payment. To render a union a marriage only two things are essential. First there must be no positive barrier (such as known consanguinity between the parties . . .) and secondly there must be an offer and an acceptance. The offer and acceptance are symbolised by the man offering the woman's *gol*⁶ a sheep (*dyl dhok*). Acceptance of this sheep signifies acceptance of the suitor. The marriage is then complete.⁷

This transaction, which is limited to the immediate family of the parties to the marriage, is followed by *tieng mogho* (the brewing of beer) and a wedding dance (*wogho thiek*) to which many persons are invited and which therefore serves to make the union widely known. It is not, however, strictly correct to say that the marriage is,

¹ The tendency to use cash in lieu of cattle is apparently increasing.

² Ratio of human to cattle population: Shilluk 1:10.25; Nuer 1:2.5 (highest recorded).

³ See Bibliography of the Shilluk, given in a previous article (*Africa*, xii, 2).

⁴ Pumphrey, 'The Shilluk Tribe', *S.N.R.*, vol.

xxiv, 1941.

⁵ Based on field work carried out in 1937 and on an investigation and analysis of the marriages of one Shilluk lineage carried out in 1948. The results are to be published later.

⁶ Family group and legal guardians.

⁷ Pumphrey, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

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An analysis of Shilluk marriages has shown that many cattle which should be retained for bridewealth to be used by the bride's male kinsmen are, in fact, frequently paid away as debts, or slaughtered, or sold to obtain cash in times of famine. This is perhaps natural among the Shilluk, who have to place greater reliance on an agricultural economy, but whose agricultural activities are no more productive or reliable than are those in other parts of the Nilotic area.¹ 583 [241] 171

Pumphrey goes on to say,

accordingly it seldom occurs that, owing to the death of all the original marriage cattle, the wife's relatives become interested in the breaking up of the marriage. Possibly as a safeguard against this very contingency the Shilluk have a custom which compels the bridegroom, during the first three or four years of his marriage, to replace by living cattle any of the original cattle he paid as bridewealth which may die in the interim.² 586 [851]

It is not clear, however, at what stage of marriage the bridegroom is absolved from this responsibility. Some Shilluk say that it no longer applies when the marriage is finally confirmed by the birth of a child and the bride's change of residence. 851

Pumphrey adds that:

It is a natural corollary of all this, that the progeny of the marriage cattle are not reclaimed. The claim is for a roughly equivalent amount of cattle. This amount will vary according to the number of children borne to the man by the wife.³

The Legitimacy of Children

With regard to the legitimacy of children in case of divorce, we hear that, 'the children born of the dissolved marriage are legitimate irrespective of the smallness of the cattle payments and of the fact that the marriage was short-lived'.⁴ Pumphrey mentions, not here but later, that a certain number of cattle must remain with the wife's family if the ex-husband is to retain legal parenthood of these children. If these deductions are not made, the children are automatically classed as *okeijo*. 586 848 [583]

On this subject Pumphrey says,

If the wife had produced sufficient children to wipe off the whole bridewealth, the husband will be entitled to receive nothing upon the termination of the marriage, except that . . . if the marriage has been broken through his wife's bad behaviour the husband may be awarded the return of at least a part.⁵

My own investigations lead me to believe that this statement is incorrect, at any rate according to the principles of Shilluk law, for although a husband may be so exasperated by the conduct of his wife as to demand return of all his bridewealth cattle, he can only do so by waiving all legal rights in the children of the union, and he is unlikely to do this. 114 586 848

Among the Shilluk these questions arise principally in connexion with subsequent rights in the bridewealth cattle of a daughter. The question of nomenclature, impor- 171 848

¹ Crop production in Shilluk country is unreliable and erratic because the soil on the high ground in the immediate vicinity of the villages is exhausted, while the land in the hinterland is subject to flood owing to poor drainage.

² Pumphrey: unpublished records.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Pumphrey, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

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This also applies to a girl who (on Pumphrey's definition) is already technically married, but still living in her father's home. The seduction of a girl in this condition (which I prefer to call betrothal) by an outsider is not considered a more serious offence than seduction of a girl who has not been bespoken. In such circumstances, too, the compensation is the recognized right of her father or legal guardian and not of her so-called husband. It is true that the latter will usually be expected to collect the compensation and to take action either directly or through the agency of the Courts, but he will ultimately hand over the ox to the girl's father. Seduction of a girl in these circumstances is not therefore adultery in the legal sense.

Seduction, whether of an unbetrothed or of a betrothed girl, if followed by pregnancy, is considered a more serious offence and demands a higher rate of compensation, which again is claimed as the right of the girl's father. This is known as *kwar yar nian ejer* and is nowadays fixed at three head of cattle.¹ Again, in the case of an unbetrothed girl, her own kinsmen will take action, but if the girl is betrothed, her future bridegroom will take up the matter on behalf of her family.

An act of adultery with a wife (in the full legal sense) demands an indemnity of two head of cattle (*kwar kwob eis dhano*) payable to her husband.

The impregnation of a married woman (in the full legal sense) is a much more serious offence and the recognized compensation is four head of cattle:²—*kwar yar eis dhano* or *kwar yar eis ei*. The cattle are claimed by the woman's legal husband who will retain them unless there is a divorce, in which case they go to her kinsmen. In fact they would be deducted from the cattle which the wife's kinsmen should return to the husband on divorce and it is unlikely that he would hand them over, especially if they had been paid a long time before.³

If a divorce follows the offence the child will normally become *okrijo* (unless legitimization fees are paid) and will be brought up by its mother's kinsmen. Otherwise, children born of adultery belong to the legal husband, even if the wife leaves him to live with her lover.

Adultery with the Wives of Kinsmen

As among other Nilotic tribes, the exaction of compensation usually depends on the relationship between the husband and the woman's lover. Pumphrey says,

No *kwar* is payable where a man has relations with the wife of his brother or his father. In fact, little resentment is felt in such cases, especially if the offender is unmarried, the realistic view prevailing that it is better so than that he should incur cattle payments by exploits elsewhere.

This statement is substantially correct, though it must be realized that it does not imply that there is anything in the nature of the right of access to each other's wives by close kinsmen.⁴ It is forbidden for two (uterine) brothers to cohabit with the

¹ Shilluk say that it was seven head in the time of *reid Kur* (1902).

² Shilluk say that the number demanded in the past was eight.

³ Unlike the Nuer and Dinka, there is no limit to the number of times a man may demand compensation for the adultery of his wife. Moreover, if several

men are concerned, compensation is demanded in full from each. This does not apply if a child is born, as here only one man can be held responsible, and it is said that the woman will sometimes be prevailed upon to name the richest of her lovers.

⁴ As suggested by Hofmayr.

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OBSERVATIONS ON THE SHILLUK OF THE UPPER NILE

THE LAWS OF HOMICIDE AND THE LEGAL FUNCTIONS OF THE RETH

P. P. HOWELL

INTRODUCTION

PUBLISHED literature on the subject of the Shilluk is considerable¹ and there are also many interesting accounts of specific subjects buried in the files of the Administration. Nowhere, however, is there a complete account of all aspects of Shilluk life. Moreover, there has been a tendency to concentrate on certain aspects, notably the Divine Kingship, to the exclusion of others. In 1941 Mr. M. E. C. Pumphrey and I published two articles: the first a general summary account of the Shilluk tribe based on Mr. Pumphrey's observations and wide experience; the second a more detailed analysis of one Shilluk settlement,² the result of fieldwork carried out in 1937. In 1944 I had the privilege of attending the installation of *reth* Anei Kur and, together with Mr. W. P. G. Thomson, published a full account.³ Subsequently Mr. Thomson published his 'Further Notes on the Death of a Shilluk Reth',⁴ after the death of *reth* Anei in 1943. This, with Professor Evans-Pritchard's Frazer Lecture, *The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk of the Nilotic Sudan*,⁵ represents the total of information published on the subject of the Shilluk in recent years.

The Shilluk are an exceptionally conservative people and, perhaps the legacy of centuries of resistance to external aggression, have a natural distaste for innovation. Yet times are changing and it is therefore all the more important that the gaps in our knowledge of Shilluk society as it was during the last few decades, and is now, should be filled. During the last two years I have had occasional opportunities to visit the Shilluk and to continue fieldwork, begun in 1937. The results of these investigations,

¹ See Bibliography, pp. 118-19.

² Pumphrey, M. E. C., 'The Shilluk Tribe', and Howell, P. P., 'The Shilluk Settlement', *S.N.R.*, vol. xxiv, 1941.

³ 'The Death of a Reth of the Shilluk and the

Installation of his Successor.' By Howell, P. P., and Thomson, W. P. G., *ibid.*, vol. xxvii, 1946.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. xxix, part ii, 1948.

⁵ Evans-Pritchard, E. E., *Frazer Lecture 1948* Cambridge University Press, 1948.

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121 which largely concern social structure and kinship systems, are to be published later. In this article I have attempted to set down the evidence, often conflicting, concerning the secular and legal functions of the *rith* or king and, since these are relevant, the Shilluk laws of homicide. Professor Evans-Pritchard points out 'if we are to understand the place of the kingship in Shilluk society we must, I think, beware of attempts to define it in terms of judicial and administrative functions and view it rather as a ritual office and in a wider political context'.¹ There are in fact two opposing views. On the one hand are those who consider that the *rith* was the head of a highly-organized administration with a hierarchy of appointed chiefs; that he had absolute powers of adjudication and execution; that he exacted tribute from his people; that he imposed fines upon them for offences against the State. On the other hand are those who hold the opinion that the *rith* had no extensive secular functions of a political or administrative nature, but only a supreme ritual function to perform as the central symbol of the moral and natural order. That the political homogeneity of the Shilluk and the national characteristics of their political structure are maintained by the institution of the *rith* is not to be denied. An analysis of Shilluk political structure, of the segments themselves and of their latent opposition, reveals many forms which closely resemble similar segments in Nuer and Dinka society. The existence of the *rith* gives meaning and co-ordination to the segments of Shilluk society which would otherwise lack political cohesion. But how far are we justified in assuming that the *rith* was an autocratic ruler who intervened in everyday affairs and imposed his authority on his people?

CHARACTERISTICS OF SHILLUK SOCIETY

101 The Shilluk are a Nilotic tribe who occupy a narrow strip of country mainly along
 131 the west bank of the Nile from Tonga to approximately Lat. 11° N. They are clearly of the same basic stock as the Nuer and Dinka, but have closer affinities with the peoples classified as Shilluk-speaking, i.e. the Anuak, who live along the Baro and Pibor rivers on the frontier of the Sudan and Ethiopia, the Acholi, Lango, Alur, Jopadola, Jaluo,² who live as far south as the north-eastern shores of Lake Victoria, and small groups living in the area of the upper waters of the Bahr el Ghazal. Their mythology suggests a common origin and their language is closely allied.

173 According to tradition the Shilluk migrated from the south through the Bahr el Ghazal into their present country under the leadership of Nyikang, their culture hero and the founder of the present dynasty of Shilluk kings. They conquered and subsequently mixed with the original inhabitants (about whom we know little except that they were probably not a Nilotic people) and extended their territory by raids and infiltration considerably farther north than their present boundaries. Tradition, supported by tribes other than the Shilluk and by Arab tribes living farther north, indicates that Shilluk country once extended as far north as Khartoum.

105 The Shilluk are now a sedentary people and have nothing approaching the large-scale dry-season migration of the Dinka and Nuer in search of green pasture. Their
 361 permanent villages, built on the high ground close to the Nile, are occupied all the

¹ Evans-Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

² See, for example, Driberg, *The Lango*; Northcote, *The Nilotic Kavirondo*; J.R.A.I., 1907; Evans-

Pritchard, 'Luo Tribes and clans', *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, no. vii.

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Government, with periodic modifications, has utilized existing divisions of the country as administrative units, and has drawn its agents from the dominant lineages of each, thus creating a hierarchy of chiefs responsible to the *reth* himself; but this is not necessarily evidence that such a system was a reality in the past. On this subject Pumphrey expresses the opinion that, 'The power of the *Reths* before the Turkish interference was undoubtedly great. It was based partly on the semi-divinity with which tribal tradition clothes them and partly upon their great wealth in cattle and slaves. Justice was probably rough and large-scale fighting more prevalent than litigation, such law-suits as there were being seen, as previously mentioned, either by the settlement chief or by the *Reth* at Fashoda.' He adds in a footnote that 'The *Reth* is said to have had the enviable privilege of killing a tiresome litigant with a club.' In an unpublished record Pumphrey goes farther than this and says:

I do not think it is true to say that as far back as Shilluk tradition goes, there is a system of administration and Courts with the *reth* at the head of it and powers descending through the heads of provinces, whom we call Court Chiefs, to heads of sections down to the village headman. . . . Naturally as one Chief or another attained to local prestige, he would tend to attract cases to him, and certainly for a period the princesses of Detim used to see local cases. There were, however, only four regular offices under the *reth*. The Chiefs of Luak and Gerr lived on either side of Fashoda and were his right-hand men. The Chiefs of Muomo and Tonga were chiefs of the marches whose definite job it was to keep a look out for invading enemies. Apart from this, however, the Chiefs of the marches were also the *reth*'s representatives in the two extremes of the country and used both to see cases themselves and send along to Fashoda those cases which they thought the *reth* should see. Beneath these four officials were the Chiefs (*iyak*) i.e. holders of the *lan*.² Our present 'Section Chiefs' are only some of them *lan* holders, for the reason that 'sections' (occasionally somewhat arbitrarily formed) contain usually several original villages and each village has a *lan* (by an 'original village' I mean the parent village of a group of old shoots of villages). It was through these *iyak* and through these four senior officials that the Shilluk country used to be ruled. The *reth* did not tour much, but had the people sent to him at Fashoda. If a killing occurred, the offending lineage would have to produce a girl and a boy. The girl would be handed to the brother (or near relative) of the dead man and the boy would go to be slave to the *reth*. If the case was not settled, or if one village went to fight with another one without sufficient cause, the *reth* would send his army (*tick*) to take all the cattle from the offending village, or, if necessary burn their villages. This army would consist of one or more of the adjacent villages, its strength depending on the amount of potential resistance. Any number of sections could be raised and it seems that the sections so instructed were glad to go, since the *reth*'s army was seldom, if ever, opposed and consequently there was little bloodshed, but a certain amount of booty.³

Pumphrey's opinions may seem somewhat contradictory, but it is clear that he thinks there was no highly efficient State system with an all-powerful *reth* at the head.

Evans-Pritchard points out that:

It is unlikely that the so-called 'provinces' were in fact more than districts or that they were in any sense administrative departments before they were made into something of the kind by foreign governments. Moreover, though doubtless the king exercised considerable influence in the country and may have confirmed settlement chiefs in office, he did not

¹ Pumphrey, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

² *Lan*, robe of office given by the *reth*.

³ Pumphrey: Unpublished records. Undated: circa 1936.

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tion, from which he may have deducted recognized fees for his services in the same way as the Nuer and Dinka functionaries did, or did he appropriate the cattle to himself as head of the State? Was homicide a crime against society of which the *resh* was the central representative, or was it merely a private delict? These questions are relevant and fundamental to the whole problem of the nature of Shilluk law and the position of the monarchy.

As among other Nilotic people, we are faced with the difficulty of finding out how homicide was composed before the advent of the present Government. Among the Shilluk it would really be necessary to have information dating back to a period before the advent of the Turkish régime in 1867. It is doubtful, of course, whether the Turks ever had sufficient control over the Shilluk to have any direct influence on their laws and legal procedures, but since they attempted to administer the country through the agency of the *resh*, at any rate during some periods of their administration, they doubtless influenced him in this particular connexion. Except for vague references to the existence of homicide, to internecine strife, and the warlike character of the Shilluk, I know of no precise mention of this subject in early literature.

Blood-fends and inter-settlement fighting

Shilluk settlements have certain distinctive characteristics including the restriction of age-set names and the ritual of the age-grade system within the settlement. Although now fast disappearing, and no longer of great significance owing to the repressive policy of the Government, the primary function of the age-grade organization seems to have been military.¹ Hofmayr on this subject says:

Every man is a soldier and literally always under 'arms'. Every Shilluk who has ceremonially danced, is a warrior as long as he is able to bear arms. They form groups. Every settlement is independent with its own *huy* (principal singer and president). Different settlements combine and rally forth under the leadership of the eldest *huy* against their powerful enemies.²

The *huy* or *lung*³ is, within the settlement, the leader of organized hostilities, which have been frequent between Shilluk settlements. His function in this connexion is brought out again and again in official documents and the attitude of the Administration has throughout been hostile. We read, for example, in the records of the Shilluk Chiefs' Council that 'The *resh* is opposed to them all as a subversive influence, but there are evidently some Chiefs who are afraid of them. Young *huy* who give trouble shall be punished and turned out.'⁴ Again, in 1947:

A *huy*, or war-lord in Shilluk, is a social institution which has been forbidden for six years in Shilluk country, and the bar is well known. . . . The *huy* . . . is essentially a leader of the youth of a section, i.e. the warrior class. It is said that in the old days, when there was little public security and each section had to look after itself, the *huy* was a useful functionary, and in so far as he co-ordinated the warriors of a section this was doubtless so. Now, any 'class consciousness' on the part of the warriors must have an aggressive tendency as it can

¹ Howell, op. cit., p. 37.

² Hofmayr, op. cit.

³ Cf. the Dinka word *huy* or 'expert'—though among the Shilluk the term is restricted to the age-

set leader, whose duties are primarily military. See also Howell, op. cit., p. 60.

⁴ Records of Shilluk Chiefs' Council meeting, 1954 (unpublished).

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There are also scattered references by Hofmayr, who writes:

When the number of dead and wounded is equal on both sides, they stop fighting; then the king will hold a Court and punish the party who is in the wrong. . . . In the case of mortal wounds, the penalty is an ox. In the case of deaths, ten head of cattle have to be paid and formerly a maiden instead of the cattle. This heavy fine is paid to the king who in return would give two or three oxen to the family of the deceased for the mourning dance.

Later, talking of the reign of *reth* Kur, he says:

Two villages, Bol and Pabur, were fighting over a beautiful maiden. There was much blood shed on both sides. The king went to Pabur and at night time he occupied the village. Next morning he sat in Court and took all the ornaments and cattle away from the village, even the clothes of the village. As he favoured Bol, he never did anything there.¹

Westermann, whose information² is least reliable, states that:

Murder cases were tried by a court of chiefs and the king. If a man was condemned, he was disgraced in many ways before the people. Sometimes he was led about the village with a cow-ropes around his neck, and then executed by hanging. If a man was executed on account of a crime, his whole family and everything he possessed became the property of the king.³

and also that:

In the case of certain infractions of the law the convict became the slave of the king, and could no more return to his home. These slaves are known as *tes ared* ('men of crime') or *ader* ('slaves' of the Royal Household).

Apart from a description of a peace ceremony performed by the *reth* published by the Reverend D. S. Oyler, which will be discussed later, there are few references in published literature to homicide and the settlement of blood-feuds among the Shilluk. Naturally enough, administrative records contain frequent references to the subject because the Administration has been much concerned with the matter. Pumphrey, who was perhaps best qualified to weigh the evidence, unfortunately does not describe the procedures in detail nor record actual instances.

A full description of a peace ceremony between the warring settlements of Owaci and Thworo already mentioned was recorded in the Shilluk District files by Major G. W. Titherington in 1932. He writes as follows:

A peace ceremony was celebrated by the *reth* of the Shilluk between the sections of Owaci and Thworo on their traditional battle-ground on 2-3-32.

This feud is the most bitter and bloody of modern times and in about twenty years probably some fifty casualties have occurred in fighting and by retaliatory murder, and the numerous attempts to stop it have failed. Peace had been in the air since the Shilluk Chiefs' meeting in January, and, all preliminaries having been agreed to, the *reth* arrived to stay with the local Chief on February 29th. He saw all Chiefs and Headmen concerned on March 1st and 2nd. He then went to Thworo where the Court Chief brought a guard of about one hundred spears. These were in formation and fully armed, but in undress and without shields. The four Thworo companies took about an hour and a half to get assembled. There were about five hundred men on parade and (by then) all fully equipped, drums and kudu horns were in full blast and everyone in a muck sweat and vast excitement. The *reth* addressed them briefly and they replied that they wanted peace. He got them on the move,

¹ Hofmayr, op. cit.

² Westermann, *The Shilluk People*, 1912, p. 250n.

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led by the guard, and then motored on to Owaci who were similarly started off, about eight hundred strong, also in four companies.

There was a large assembly uniting at the meeting place, with three bullocks and four sheep for sacrifice. These were provided by the *rit* and the two factions.

Two neutral Chiefs had previously been told off to lead the factions to the meeting place which had been marked. This is important because experience has shown¹ that left to themselves the two factions will sit down about two hundred yards apart and then the memory of stolen cattle or a murdered brother will be too much for someone's self-control resulting in a flow of martial oratory. This will lead some young blood to dash forward and hurl spears or insults and there follows retaliation. If they can be got to move up close together without pause, it is obvious that the consequences of any hostilities will be so serious that anyone trying to start anything will instantly be suppressed by his wiser brethren in arms.

Both factions were finally got to sit down close up to the line and to put their shields on the ground as a sign of mutual confidence. The *rit* walked among them and briefly addressed them and they answered that they wanted peace. He was rather an impressive figure and seemed to have the situation under confident control. Some concerted hand-clapping was taken as a good sign by the public.

The *rit*'s bullock was then led between one faction and the guard, thrown on its back, held by men of both factions, speared by men of both factions and had its throat cut.² Next, a procession of neutrals was formed who took hand-fuls of the stomach contents and marched round throwing it at the factions. The next item caused most interest among the public. Thworo got up, marched round the guard and sat down touching Owaci who had the good manners to remain seated. Owaci's bull and sheep were led up, but put aside to be sacrificed at the shrine of Queen Abujok in Thworo next day. Thworo's bull was then led up and killed just as the *rit*'s had been by persons with an active interest in the feud. Lesser folk killed the sheep, one of which got up and managed to stagger a few steps under a rain of spear thrusts. This was considered a bad omen and one by-stander recalled the abortive peace between Fialo and Fanyidwai in 1926.³

This cannot be quoted as evidence of the *rit*'s executive powers, for we know that he was accompanied by the District Commissioner on this occasion, but certain interesting facts emerge. In the first place, the attitude of opposition between the two groups is clearly stressed, though it is more than probable that at proceedings of this kind a display of hostile attitudes is demanded by convention. The author indicates that the *rit* busies himself with the actual organization of the ceremonies and certainly acts as arbitrator, visiting first one side and then the other. It is unfortunate that little mention is made of the ritual functions of the *rit*. In 1920 the Rev. D. S. Oyler described a similar peace ceremony in the settlements of Maimom, Fakoi, Patworo, and Fialo⁴ and his account of the procedure does not greatly differ from that of Titherington. He implies throughout that the desire for peace came from the participants and there is no suggestion that peace was forced upon them, even though the *Mamur*⁵ was present. 'The people of this District', he says 'were tired of con-

¹ Titherington makes no reference to instances from which such experience derived. It must be assumed that some peace ceremonies failed from the start.

² Shilluk say that each man concerned should stab the sacrificial ox, which is then split (gutted) and the two portions divided among the respective parties. This procedure is reminiscent of all ceremonies performed

in Nilotic tribes for the restoration of peaceful relations.

³ Unpublished District records by G. W. Titherington, at Malakal, dated 1-4-32.

⁴ Oyler, the Rev. D. S. 'The Shilluk Peace Ceremony', *J.N.R.*, 1920.

⁵ *Bulurum* (or more probably Egyptian) administrative officer.

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ditional guerrilla warfare, and some of them were anxious to have the trouble finally settled.' He adds, 'Each side was afraid to make the decision lest it appear weak'. 628 643

Oyler's account gives us a clearer picture of the ritual performed by the *reth* and also of his function in exhorting the people to make peace. There is nowhere any suggestion that he compels them to do so, he merely 'advises'. Much of this 'advice' is tainted with statements which reflect the *reth*'s official capacity as Government agent. [648] 'The king made a talk in which he pointed out that the colour of the animal to be killed had bits of both red and black. The red was for the blood that would be shed, should someone break the covenant, and the black was for the evil of such a course. . . . "We, the black people unite with the red (white) people of the Government to reconcile you". Though much of the metaphorical aspects of this speech may have derived from the Rev. D. S. Oyler himself, it is not, as a matter of fact, untypical of Shilluk speeches of this sort.¹ Later we hear that 'he (the *reth*) informed the people that the animal was a cow of Nyikang, descendant of a cow owned by Nyikang. The king added most seriously: "The flesh of this animal is my flesh, and its blood is the same as my blood. Great disaster will come on you, if you break the covenant, for you will be cursed by the blood." Then, after considerable delay because no one was willing to take the responsibility of being first to spear the animal, men of both factions speared it to death and, as described also by Titherington, were pelted with the stomach contents. [114]

One thing is striking. The orderly procedure described in these accounts bears little resemblance to the punitive expeditions carried out by the *reth* in order to suppress internal hostilities, and though this might be expected after thirty years of administration, it seems to me that the *reth*'s role as arbitrator is far more in accordance with his true functions in Shilluk society.

There are also references in District records to these punitive expeditions, but always without the evidence of actual instances. One hears of the 'custom of the *reth* of punishing a murderous or disobedient village by looting and destroying it. This he did either by sending a force of his own, if it was near Washoda, or else, if it was a long way off, by sending orders to the Chief of the neighbouring village or section to do this. Such a force was apparently not resisted and there was no difficulty in finding it because there was sure to be a community with a feud against the guilty and also the *reth* only kept part of the loot. . . . This system seems to have survived the *Turkis* and *Mahdia*, possibly because there was nothing incompatible in it with methods of those days.² 117 628 643 648

The author of this account might have added that much in the methods employed may even have derived from Turkish example. The Turks were at pains to use the *reth* as an administrative agent and doubtless encouraged such raids carried out in the name of justice and security. The author continues: 'However, these methods came to an abrupt end with the removal of *reth* Kur in 1903, the appointment by the Government of his aged successor *reth* Fadiet, and the rules laid down at the time.'

From scattered references of this nature we are not able to reach reliable conclusions concerning the *reth*'s executive authority in the past in connexion with homicide and blood-feuds, whether actual or theoretical. There is certainly a strong tradition 628 643

¹ Cf. speeches made at the installation of *reth* Anel wad Kur. Howell & Thomson, op. cit., p. 71.

² 'A note on Customary Law', dated June 1911 (unpublished). The italics are mine.

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some of the beasts are sacrificed during the ceremonies and others are added to their personal herds. One must, therefore, beg the question whether those portions alleged to be the right of the *rit* were ritual fees of this nature rather than 'fines' as is so frequently stated. It is a question of interpretation, and I suggest that even though repressive action and the exaction of 'fines' may have occurred, with the backing of foreign Governments, during the latter half of the last century and the early years of the present Administration, the payments were ritual in origin and concerned the *rit*'s ritual function in society. The use of the word 'fine' appears to me to be inaccurate.

Ritual of Purification for Homicide

As among other Nilotic peoples, a Shilluk who has killed another must perform certain rites to cleanse him from impurity which might otherwise affect his kinsmen. This process involves, first, the letting of blood, which is carried out by a magical expert (*ajwago*)¹ who makes a small incision on his right shoulder with a spear. This is known as *tai dhani*. Secondly, a small sacrifice is made (usually a sheep), the object of which is to remove the curse of the dead man's spirit. As among the Nuer and Dinka, the killer is not expected to eat or drink until this ritual has been performed.

Accidental Killing

Accidental killing (*ajwago*) is apparently not regarded as a serious offence among the Shilluk, especially if the two parties are connected by kinship or by close association in one territory. Hofmayr says: 'Accidental killing requires only the sacrifice of an ox at a peace ceremony and no more.'² District records indicate that two head of cattle sometimes were paid. At the Shilluk Chiefs' Council in 1934 it is recorded that 'the Council do not know whether there is a definite law on this subject or not. The *rit* says that years ago it was two head of cattle, one to the relatives of the dead man, one to the *rit*. He himself suggests two head of cattle to go to the deceased's family. This is confirmed as law.' I do not think that any such fixed indemnity existed in the past, but that intention was recognized and accident accepted in mitigation of the offence. At any rate the indignation of the deceased's kinsmen would not be so acute, and they would be prepared to accept an indemnity less than that normally demanded for intentional homicide.

Bodily Injuries not causing Death

On the subject of bodily injuries less than death, the evidence is even less reliable than on homicide. It is evident that such injuries require the payment of compensation if retaliatory action is not to follow. At the same time it is perhaps surprising that among the Shilluk, unlike the Nuer and Dinka, there are no recognized injuries for which compensation is given on a definite scale. We hear that 'for injury' an immediate payment of one bull must be made as a guarantee of good faith. Subsequent settlement is made on a scale regulated by the severity of the ultimate damage and rising, in the case of blinding, to the same rate as for death. Apart from the problem of the *rit*'s intervention in matters of this sort, it may be assumed, in the absence of

¹ amount to eight cattle out of a total of forty.

² *Ajwago*: Magical expert or specialist. These persons are not comparable to the Nuer functionaries,

such as the *four four*, but to the possessors of spirits (*goun kweth*). *Ajwago* is a derivative of *jud*, meaning God in Shilluk.

³ *Op. cit.*

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further evidence, that such offences were treated as private delicts in the past, though nowadays, through the influence of the Government, penal sanctions may be applied.

Witchcraft

The Dinka and Nuer tell us that witches and other anti-social persons were sometimes dispatched by their victims or their kinsmen with the tacit consent of the community. Acts of homicide against persons whose actions threatened the integrity of the community were either not subject to restitutory sanctions at all, or the compensation demanded by their kinsmen was on a much reduced scale.¹ A similar attitude towards witches is to be found among the Shilluk, but again without the support of actual examples.

In the published literature there are references to persons described variously as witches, sorcerers, magicians, medicine-men, and possessors of the evil eye,² and their activities and methods are described, but there are few references to the way in which they were treated. The sanction applied to witchcraft is normally counter-magic consciously applied by the victim.

Hofmayr speaks of 'the *jal yat*, the evil-doer, his aim in life is to do harm, both to life and to property, either by natural means or others,' and adds that 'the *jal yat* works in the dark, but if he is caught, he will be severely punished. Often he is handed over to the people who kill him.' Hofmayr also speaks of the 'poison mixer' (again *jal yat*) who 'is hardly ever discovered. If he is caught, the people will lynch him on the spot and his relations will have to leave the district.'³ Another passage mentions that the compensation for killing a person possessing the evil eye is only four head of cattle instead of ten. These references, supported by what the Shilluk have told me, suggest an attitude similar to that found among the Nuer and Dinka.

It might be expected that, if there were any greater development of concepts of public law, and if the *reth* performed formal judicial and executive functions, acts of this sort would be subject not to merely private retaliation with the consent of the community, but rather to repressive sanctions applied by the *reth* or his representatives. In fact there is no evidence of this. It may be noted in this connexion that there are instances recorded during the last thirty years of attempts to introduce alien cults which would clearly be subversive of the ritual status of the *reth* and, through him, of the religious foundations of Shilluk society. For this reason Shilluk who have openly practised the Dinka cult of Deng have been severely repressed.⁴ There is good reason to believe that such activities would have been punished by death in the past and they are, by their very nature, public delicts amounting to acts of treason.

CONCLUSIONS

Much of the evidence so far quoted is unreliable, mainly because the authors have recorded impressions rather than facts. My own conversations with the Shilluk on the subject have been limited and perfunctory, and for this reason cannot provide

¹ For example, the Nuer *ruh* or Ghoul - see Howell and Lewis, 'Nuer Ghouls - a form of Witchcraft', *J.N.R.* xxviii, 1947.

² *ganga*, magician, *jal yat*, sorcerer, *yab*, possessor of the evil eye. There are many references to the

activities of such persons in Hofmayr, *Die Shilluk*. See also Oyler, D. S., 'The Herd Medicine Man', *J.N.R.* 1920.

³ Hofmayr, *op. cit.*
⁴ See Willis, C. A., 'The Cult of Deng', *J.N.R.* vol. xi, p. 193.

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a basis for definite conclusions. It is, however, probably safe to say that among the Shilluk homicide is a private delict requiring the restoration of equilibrium by the payment of compensation in cattle. The main object of such payments is to marry a wife into the kinship group of the deceased—rather than individually to the name of the deceased—and thus ensure its continuity and increase, which have been interrupted by the removal of one of its members. Retaliatory sanctions are also operative, in that the duty to take vengeance on the person of the killer or one of his kinsmen is recognized.¹ In principle, there are here no profound differences between the Shilluk and their Nuer and Dinka neighbours. The rate of compensation is governed by the relationship between the parties and thus the offence is subject to social range. Patricide and fratricide, regarded as the gravest possible offences against the integrity of the kinship group, are subject only to supernatural sanctions. These apply within the local lineage in lessening degree according to the relationship between the persons concerned, and the ritual expiation is known in Shilluk as '*cuila ji kipo rewo*'.

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We cannot, however, entirely ignore the strong tradition which prevails among the Shilluk and the views of early writers, that the *reth*, as ultimate authority, had the recognized power to intervene, to enforce such payments and, moreover, to exact additional payments in person and kind amounting to fines which he seized for himself. If we are to believe these traditions, we must conclude that public action against warring factions, whose continued enmity was disturbing the peace of Shilluk society as a whole, was sometimes undertaken. This does not, in my opinion, alter the argument that individual acts of homicide were treated as private delicts involving primarily the restoration of equilibrium between the units of society concerned. If, however, the portions alleged to have been taken regularly by the Shilluk *reth* are regarded as 'fines' paid to the head of the State (though in my opinion this is a wrong interpretation), then homicide among the Shilluk appears to be in a transitional stage between a private and a public delict, and was so even prior to the introduction of penal actions by the present Government.

[672] ¹ Pumphrey observes: 'It is interesting that where a compensatory payment for killing is due (in contrast to compensation for lesser wrongs) the net is

cast wider and not only the lineage, but even members of other lineages of the same clan are expected to contribute.' *Op. cit.*, p. 25.

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OF FUNG AND SHILLUK

Mohamed Rind

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114 Any one who deals with either the Fung or the Shilluk, historians as well as anthropologists, must say a word about the possible relationship between the two kingdoms. Many pages have been written on this subject by well known writers, but the lack of a good comparative study that would envisage the whole problem in its various aspects is noted in some of these works. Others were motivated by "a prioristic" conceptions, or one-sidedness, or depended entirely upon certain points, or "... fever for verbal similarities". 1)

The last word in the controversy has not yet been said, and most probably will not be said. I do not contend that this paper will put an end to the controversies, but I think that by taking into consideration the historical as well as the anthropological points of view, we can reach a safe stage at which we can build our own point towards this complicated subject.

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A) The Problem:

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175 The story begins in 1796, the year James Bruce of Kinnaird -an English traveller- published a voluminous work describing his journey to discover the sources of the Nile, which took place between 1768 and 1773. In 1772 Bruce was in Senaar, the capital of the Fung Kingdom, which was the most important and the most powerful state of the Eastern Sudan in the Middle-Ages. In this city Bruce got a glimpse of history of Kingdoms and tribal movements in this part of Africa. Bruce transmits to us what he heard (and maybe what he imagined) 2) in such a statement:

174 "In the year 1504, a black nation, hitherto unknown, inhabiting the western banks of the Bahr el Abied (White Nile) in about latitude 13, made a descent in a multitude of canoes or boats upon the Arab provinces This race of negroes is in their own country called Shilluk At the establishing of this monarchy the king and the whole nation of

- 1) Artell was so described by Chataway, p.117
- 2) It is agreed upon that Bruce always imagined many things, and in his writings pictured himself as a hero who escaped dangers through his bravery etc. ... Read a short description of Bruce's character in Crawford, pp. 253-254

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"Shillucks were pagans. They were seen afterwards converted to Mohammedanism for the sake of trading with Cairo and took the name of Fungo, which they interpret sometimes lords or conquerors, and at other times free citizens". 8)

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In another statement Bruce hits upon an important aspect of the inner organization of the state:

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"It is one of the singularities which obtains among this brutish people, that the king ascends his throne under the admission that he may be lawfully put to death by his own subjects or slaves upon a council being held by the great officers, if they decree that it is not for the advantage of the State that he be suffered to reign any longer. There is one officer of his own family who alone can be the instrument of shedding his sovereign and kinsman's blood. This officer is called Sid el Coom, master of the king's household or servants, but has no vote in deposing him; nor is any guilt imputed to him however many of his sovereigns he thus murdered. Ashmet Sid el Coom, the present regicide, and resident in Iemaina's palace seemed, by a strange accident, to be one of the gentlest spirits of any at Sennar. His place of birth was a village of Fasugle, and it appeared to me that he was still a pagan". 4)

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That was the first time the world ever heard of the name Shilluk, and thus was the beginning of the problem, which is now more than one and a half centuries old. Many authors have supported this opinion of the Shilluk origin of the Fung kingdom, and many as well objected, producing speculations and theories. Others changed their opinions on second thoughts, and until now the handling of the subject and the introduction of new ideas concerning this tangible problem are still forthcoming; but we can summarize these controversies into three major lines:

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- 1) The Shilluk origin of the Fung. 5)
- 2) The Arab origin of the Fung - or generally the Eastern origin. 6)
- 3) The Western origin of the Fung, i.e. Darfur or other western Islamic empires of the vast Sudan. 7)

What concerns us in this paper is the first item; that is, broadly speaking, the relations between the Fung and the Shilluk, while the origin of the Fung themselves is more or less a historical subject.

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- 8) Seligman, p. 424. (As there is in Vienna but a French translation of Bruce, I preferred to quote him, whenever it was possible, in English from any other book).
- 9) Seligman, p. 425.
- 10) Bruce, Arkell, Westermann, (and Crawford to a certain extent). The Fung Chronicles, Awad, Bouscilly, and Jackson are for the Arab origin, Chataway and Walder are for an eastern origin, i.e. the Fung were sent by Abyssinia to restore order after the fall of Christian Naba.
- 11) Tremaux, and later on Arkell.

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To sum up what has been said above we may say that about the second half of the 18th century, a relatively fair complexioned wave of people settled in the present Shillukland, and united the aboriginals under the leadership of Nyikang into the framework of a nation. 174

The Shilluk traditions, as my informants told me, reveal that the ruling class brought with it the system of kingship. Nyikang had taught the people the exact procedure of electing the new kings; a procedure which is followed to the word until our day. If this is true, we can presume that Nyikang, when he taught the Shilluk this unwritten law, was quoting as much as possible the succession law of his own homeland. Some of the important procedures, or let us say a rite performed to know if the deity gives his consent to the new king-elect, is performed under the waters of the Nile. Quite readily this rite would be understood if we remember the Shilluk tradition which says that the original home of Nyikang was situated on the banks of a *NAM DOUN*, which means a great river or a lake. [173]

Hofmayr tell us that Tago, the Shilluk king number 10, who reigned between 1690 and 1710, was the first king to introduce new coronation ceremonies. He says: "Tago führte neue Krönungszeremonien ein, an welchen die Shilluk noch heute streng festhalten". 16) If this is true, and if we reject the story told to me by my informants, and presuming that Nyikang's own family were a stock of nomads, we can say that the present Shilluk kingship was a cultural element among the aboriginal inhabitants of the area, which may have been dormant during the first rule of kings who were still clinging strongly to their own traditions, and most naturally looking down upon the aboriginal practices and cults. A hundred years later, the glorious past of the ruling east may have dimmed, and mixture and degradation of some of the ruling family members may have ultimately brought about new "shillukized" generations, thus bringing the old customs into practice. This is a mere conjecture that needs more study to prove or refute it, and this is not the right place to discuss it.

The famous divine kingship among the Shilluk is still in practice. The notion of the kings being the incarnations of the first king, i.e. Nyikang, is still working, and the coronation ceremony of King Kar, in 1951, 17) is an undisputed proof of the existence of such a notion. When such an idea is so strongly adhered to unto now -no matter if they are Moslem or Christian Shilluk converts- it follows quite logically that the other component of the divine kingship must be functioning, or at least be still vivid in men's mind, and will be readily executed if there were free chances. 18) The other component is naturally

16) Hofmayr, p. 77

17) Westerman, p. 163, translates a story about the objection of Nyikang to human sacrifices practiced by some mysterious people of the river, whom he captured and incorporated in his domain.

18) Howell, pp. 199-205. This article contains a good picture of Shilluk kings installation ceremonies.

19) The government does not allow it any more. [643]

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174 According to these two authors, the Shilluk made an attack on the Arabs and defeated them; the Arabs were reduced to a tributary state under the Shilluk. Arkell elaborates on the subject with his European mentality of statesman, and proceeds to say that the Shilluk, by a mastery of diplomacy, changed the injured pride of the Arabs to complete alliance with them, by diverting their attention to a common foe. To such high diplomacy, the Alva kingdom fell as a sacrifice. 34) Thus, the downfall of the Alva kingdom was undertaken by a combined Shilluk-Arab force !!

175 We may now proceed to give a short historical outline of the Fung kingdom, leaving this controversial point to be discussed below.

In 1534 Amara Dunkas died, leaving a vast realm which extended northward to the third cataract, including Dongola, and eastward to the Red Sea; but Suakin was a Turkish possession at that time. The White Nile probably marked the western border to latitude 13°, whence northwards the country to the west bank, which comprised Arabs from the Jaalin group, must have been under the rule of the Viceroy of Senner residing at Gerri. To the south, the Fung border included some provinces of present Ethiopia, namely Gubba, Ganjar, and Fadasi. The border in southern Gezira was not clear, but sporadic hints indicate that the Fung expanded steadily southwards. This point will also be discussed later.

The next expansion of the Fung was during the reign of King Abdul Qader, the second or third king. He reduced Jebel Gule, and converted the inhabitants to Islam. The third expansion was also to the south-west. King Badi Abu Dign crossed the White Nile in 1642, invaded the Tegali Moslem kingdom and reduced it to a tributary state. He also "attacked the Shilluk negroes and took a large number of slaves". 35)

In Fung history, there were two wars with Abyssinia in which there was no decisive result, except for the routing of most of the Abyssinian king's army in the second war. But these wars are not relevant to our subject.

In the year 1747, during the reign of King Badi Abu Shillukh, 36) the Fung Empire reached the zenith of its expansion. The whole of Kordofan was won to the Fungs by a man called Mohamed Abu El Keilik. During a battle with the Darfur Army, the Fung were first defeated, "the troops fled, but were rallied by Mohamed Abu El Keilik and his sons, who defeated the Army of the Furs, led

34) Arkell, (A), p.

35) Westermann, p. LV.

36) Westermann, p. LV, mis-spells his name, and writes it as Gadi Abu Shilluk, probably he was motivated by the theory of the Shilluk origin of the Fung, and found in the name another backing to the theory, forgetting that by adding "h" at the end, the word would mean -in Sudanese Arabic- the different modes of face scarves used until now in the Arabic Sudan. Abu Shillukh is not a name, but a nickname, and we find it frequent that nicknames were given to many Fung kings, according to their characteristics.

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174 But an almost continuous influx of nomads, who are of Semitic or Hamite-Semitic origin, brought about the nearly complete annihilation of Negroid elements in the North, except in such refuge areas as Nubia. In the South, the geographical environment and the paucity of the Caucasian blood, in comparison with the Negro element, created a new type, culturally clinging to the northern element, though outcrops of the old culture remain in function, modified to the new superstructure.

What is of interest to our present paper is the discussion of three names which are misunderstood, these being Fung, Hamag and Dar Fung.

114 The Fungi: Bruce gives the singular of the name by
174 'fungi', and the plural 'fungi'. This is a pure Shilluk form, 'o' being in Shilluk the ending of the noun in singular, and 'i' that of plural'. 39) Now the Arabic singular form of the word is 'funji' , and the plural is 'funj' . with a very slight 'o'  at the end of the word. Did Bruce mix the positions, and instead of writing the singular, write the plural, or vice versa? We have to bear in mind that it was certainly difficult for Bruce to write Arabic, using the Latin alphabet, and so this 'o' came at the end of his supposed singular form of the word as a substitute for the Arabic 'o' movement, which we call "damnah". At any rate the etymology of the word needs further study, should we not confine the comparison to Shilluk and Arabic only. All authorities on the subject agree that the Fung were a family, not a tribe, which developed numerous offshoots through marriage. The original physical characters, most naturally, will be modified according to the mothers. Thus, we have for example a fair offshoot like Badi el Ahmer, meaning Badi the red, due to his white complexion, and we have King Ismail, whom Bruce met at Sennar, and who appeared to him as a typical Negro. So it seems unwise to judge the origin of a family by one instance, if we know that proper Islam does not discriminate races and colours, and accordingly Fung kings married without discrimination, and accordingly different physical types ruled as kings in Sennar.

The Hamagi: This name was heard often after the Visiers of Sennar took the real power into their hands, beginning from Mohammed Abu El Keilik, i.e. the beginning of the decadent phase of the kingdom. Seligman says that "Hamag in Arabic means 'ignorant', and is used to indicate a slave or vassal ..." 40) The word in Arabic could mean also an uncultivated, brute, barbarian, disorganized group, wild etc. ... Professor Awad says "In Bornu, Arabs call the aboriginal inhabitants 'Nuba' ... (and that) some Arabs give the name 'Hamag' to the tribe of Kanem, this being a nomenclature they were used to in the East (in the Sudan of the Nile Valley)". 41)

39) Westermann, p. LIII.

40) Seligman, p. 418

41) Awad, p. 222.

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D) SUMMING UP:

Now we come to our point: What was the actual relationship between the Fungs and the Shilluk? 174

In the light which was thrown upon the whole situation from the foregoing survey, and in order not to lose ourselves in minute details, we may fix the points of discussion in the following items:

- 1) The time problem, i.e. dating the foundation of both kingdoms
- 2) The space problem, i.e. the Fung-Shilluk boundary
- 3) The cultural aspects of kingship
 - a) the meaning of kingship
 - b) the mode of accession to the throne
 - c) the mode of death of kings.
- 4) Evidence of the theory of a Shilluk origin of the Fung
- 5) Conclusion.

1) The Time Problem:

Bruce and Tremaux date the foundation of the Fung kingdom at 1604, Shoucair dates it to 1808, while Cailliaud gives 1484 as the date of founding the kingdom. 48) Now if we apply the conventional way of dating back histories, and assume $13\frac{1}{2}$ years as a reigning period for each king, we get the following dates:

- a) At the time Bruce was in Sennar, namely 1778, the ruling king was Ismail, who appears on the list of the Fung kings as number 20, and who ascended the throne in 1769. Multiplying $13\frac{1}{2}$ years by 10 kings would give 1511 as the beginning of the kingdom;
- b) Cailliaud, Tremaux and Shoucair list 29 kings from the beginning of the dynasty until the Egyptian conquest in 1820. This would give us an approximate date of 1428.

Thus, we have a difference of 84 years between a) and b). This hypothetical difference is well accounted for in the real dates we possess. It was mentioned before that the decadent phase of the Fungs began about 1785. The total period of the last 10 kings is only 44 years instead of 138 years, making a difference of 91 years, which corresponds to 84 years of difference between a) and b). This is an almost certain result and proves the validity of the $13\frac{1}{2}$ years as a criterion serving our purpose here.

Concerning the Shilluk, we have stated above the dates of 1533, 1566 and 1610 as representing different results of different criterions. From my point of view, I would prefer the date of 1566 as marking the beginning of the Shilluk kingdom, because it is based on the $13\frac{1}{2}$ years criterion, and it is reckoned from a fixed date, i.e. 1663, when the Shilluk tribe and land were incorporated as a province in the Sudan. Furthermore, we know that in the Mahdiya Regime and its aftermath, Shilluk kings were either killed or deposed, thus 174

48) Jackson, p. 98.

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174 4) Evidences of the Theory of a Shilluk origin of the Fung

James Bruce was the first to declare that the Fung were originally a Shilluk northern offshoot, who descended upon the Arabs, defeated them, and erected Sennar as a seat of their new Kingdom.

First of all, it is quite clear from the Journal of Bruce that he was very much interested in the Shangalla, and probably confused Shangalla, Shankala, and Shilluk. Once, while in Teawa near Godarof, he said that "The Fung were originally Shankala or Hamidjo", 61) and on arriving at Sennar, he added, "and are, as they are called, Funge, that is Shangalla converted to Islamism, of the country whence those Shangalla came to drive out the Arabs under Wad Agib. Of these, the government is composed. The common Shilook, or troops of the king, are mostly pagans even yet." 62)

Further quotations from Bruce give an idea about the mess into which he had fallen. He says that the king of Sennar pretends to be of noble Arab element, "but his wooly hair, and black flat features, show him to be a Shangalla; the particular name Shilook. These inhabit the large islands in the river El-Aice (the White Nile) ... The name of Shankala, given to the true blacks in Abyssinia, is not known in the kingdom of Sennar, though in features and complexion they are the same people. The river El-Aice is twice as broad as the Nile and very deep in all the course of it. Before it joins the Nile are many islands, in these dwell the Shilook, who rob in barks up the whole of it. The other blacks come from Cuba, Noba, and Famaelo, three southern provinces which depend on Sennar". 63)

The Shangalla or the Beni Shangul are Negroes of negroid tribes, living in the river valleys in the mountainous western Abyssinian escarpment. They were included within the Fung kingdom throughout its history.

It would seem that the description of the White Nile, which Bruce names El-Aice, and the description of the people who inhabit the islands of this river, is quite a separate sentence, which has nothing to do with the preceding sentence, in which he returns the Fung to a Shangalla origin. This assumption is validated by the above quotation, in which he says that the Fung are the Shangalla converted to Islam, and defines the Shilluk as the troops of the king. But this again contradicts the famous quotation, in which Bruce asserts that in 1504 a Shilluk migration founded Sennar.

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133 It is interesting to know that Bruce's statement about the Nile was not correct. He imagined that the Blue Nile was the

61) Arkell, (A), p. 220

62) Ibid, p. 220

63) Ibid, p. 220

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real Nile, and though he had explored the area of Lake Tana, he did not follow the river's course down the Sudan, but made a short-cut from Abyssinia to the Batana plains and to Sennar. All his knowledge about the course of the Blue Nile out of Sennar is hearsay only, as well as his knowledge about the White Nile. Thus, Bruce perceived that the mountains of Fasugli extend uninterrupted to the Maba mountains. On this assumption he considered that the White Nile was a little tributary to the Main Nile, and had its source in the Fasugli-Maba chain of mountains. If he erred in geographical points, could it not be possible that he would accordingly err in the relative positions of the various tribes?

Arkell dwelt on the statement of Bruce that the Sennar kings were lawfully killed by a special officer called Sid el Qom, and after the sanction of a special committee formed by the great officials of the kingdom. He tried to link this habit with the Shilluk divine kings, supporting ultimately the theory of the Shilluk origin of the Fung. Moreover, he depended much upon verbal similarities as proofs to his theory, such as Kwom, the Shilluk word for their sacred stool, to be transformed to Qom, in Sid el Qom etc. We have shown clearly that any comparison between the Shilluk king-killing and the alleged Fung-killing is false, due to the lack of the essential notion of kings as incarnations of the first Shilluk king.

Crawford, though he does not suggest a Shilluk origin of the Fung, says that there were certain Shilluk associations. He further states: "I suggest that the Shilluk association was not derived directly from the Shilluk region on the White Nile, but indirectly from the Fasughli region and the gabels to the west whose inhabitants were partly at any rate of Shilluk origin. When Amara Dunkas marched down the Blue Nile and founded his kingdom he may have carried with him some of those Shilluk associations ..."⁶⁴) Crawford then suggests that the Shilluk migrated to this area from the White Nile region starting from Melut, or Jebel Ahmed Agha, or Bank. He is compelled to such an explanation because

- 1) he finds that the inhabitants of the Fasughli region are "Negroid, and can hardly therefore have come from the north or east, and in the southeast is the land of the Hamitic Gallas". ⁶⁵)
- 2) that "evidence of place names (in both this area and the White Nile area) is here quite conclusive". ⁶⁶)

It is quite clear that Crawford does not take into consideration that the whole of the Fasughli area as well as other areas to the north were, in the distant past, a Negro home, which shrank to the present picture of pockets in the river valleys which cut deep in the western escarpment of the Abyssinian plateau.

64) Crawford, p. 156

65) *ibid.*, p. 157

66) *ibid.*, p. 157.

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114 and in the hilly offshoots of the Abyssinian highlands represented
774 by the Dar Fung mountains. This shrinkage was due to the everlasting
extension of the Hamitic and other Canaanite racial elements towards
the south. Secondly, the evidences of similar place names do not
mean a Shilluk migration alone, because though the Nilotic percentage
in these tribes' languages did reach about 65%, "further analysis
directed to determine which Nilotic language had exerted the greatest
pressure indicated no real distinction ... the percentages being
Nuer 47%, Shilluk 46%, and Dinka 45%", 67

If the Durun -a tribal group in the Dar Fung area- are
included within the Nilotic language group, 66) and if there is a
probability that the Dar Fung tribes are similar in their physical
attributes to the substratum of the northern Shilluk provinces,
then there is no wonder to see strong resemblances between both
areas, and no wonder that many authorities erred in trying to clarify
this resemblance by a one-sided Shilluk influence extended to Dar Fung.

On the same ground we can refute Westernmann's assumption
that "it is possible that this Shilluk population (the Berta and
other Dar Fung tribes) in Sennar (probably he means the Fung kingdom)
came to political influence and took part in the government of
the state". 69) In reality there is need to assume a Shilluk migration,
or invasion in this mountainous Dar Fung region, because the Shilluk
are a riverain tribe, and on account of a common substratum, physical,
cultural and linguistic in both areas.

6) Conclusion

114 From the foregoing survey it is now clear that there
648 existed a relationship between the Fung and the Shilluk, but it
is not a relationship of common origin.

114 The statement of Bruce about the invasion of the Gezira
174 by the Shilluk is not supported by dates nor by tradition of either
the Shilluk or the Fung. The only support comes from the Hamag
elders of Jebel Gule, 70) but Mr. Chataway answers this question
quite rightly. He states that "The Abu Likellik family, when
trying to oust the Fung, would be up against an obstacle of strong
prejudice, seeing that they could not deny their descent from mere
'abid'. It was then too late to provide a satisfactory nisha for
the Hamag, and the alternative was to say that the Fung were no
better. Why not say the Fung were Shilluk and tack the suggestion
on the existing traditions of Shilluk raids? That the Fung were
black was added evidence, evidence to which Bruce seems to have
given undue weight". 71)

67) Selligman, p. 422

68) Butt includes the Durun in the Nilotic language group,
and treats them as such in his book.

69) Westernmann, p. LVI.

70) See note No 59)

71) Chataway, p. 117.

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In fact, the tradition of the Shilluk tells us of hostile relations between them and the Fung, and their first encounter, as was stated above, was on a battlefield. It is quite logical that, as the Fung extended their domains across the White Nile to the Nuba mountains and the Kordofan, the Shilluk were also -for a time- incorporated in the Fung domains. 72) We must not exempt the Shilluk from sharing the same fate with other Negro and Negroid neighbouring tribes. Many of the members of these tribes were transplanted to the Sennar area, forming the bulk of the Fung armies. It is recorded that these people gave their old village names to the new villages where they were living in service of the Fung Empire. Shilluk were among the Sennar armies, and Bruce rightly said that Shilluks are the troops of the king. And owing to the extreme aloofness and haughtiness of a Shilluk, it is not possible to explain the existence of Shilluk in the Fung army, or the transplantation of these Shilluk outside their country as an act of free will on the part of the Shilluk, or as free lancers serving the military ambitions of their deadly foe. The Shilluk must have been compelled to such acts under coercive conditions. We must always bear in mind that the Shilluk were facing a better organized enemy, with cavalry, which was totally unknown warfare equipment to the Shilluk. The Shilluk may have been excellent in using their tactics of surprise attacks, and on relatively isolated groups, but should this tactic succeed against organized armies with cavalry?

Recorded in the Shilluk songs are many pieces describing the frequent Arab slave raids, the havoc they played with the Shilluk, and prayers to the Shilluk former kings and ancestors to help them against the marauders. How could it be possible then to understand the situation arising from the assumption of a Shilluk origin of the Fung, or the statement of Arkell telling us that the governor of El-Ais was ruling the Shilluk relatives on the White Nile? How could it be possible that the Fung would forget their origin and loot their relatives, subduing them to slaves or mercenaries? And if the Fung did not themselves raid the Shilluk on account of alleged blood-relationship, why did they not afford them protection against Arab raids if we know that the Arab raiders are included in the Fung domain?

The other aspect upon which Arkell leaned was the killing of kings in Sennar, and the resemblance of this habit with that which prevails among the Shilluk. But we have invalidated this statement upon qualitative grounds.

If kings of Sennar were killed lawfully by a royal executioner, which in itself is not a fact agreed upon, they were killed on a totally different basis from that which was practiced among the Shilluk. Furthermore, we know that Shilluk kings were either suffocated, or clubbed to death, but with the Fung, a king

72) Arkell, (B), p. 17. He states that "The Fung Kingdom at its prime included most of the present Sudan, from Hannele in the north to Beni Shangul and the Shilluk country in the south ..."

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174 was killed by cutting off his head with a SWORD, any other weapon
643 being a violation of custom. Tremaux writes that "... une épée,
[411] seul instrument légal en pareil cas (une épée)". 73) This is
another qualitative difference between the Shilluk and the Fung,
because we know that the Shilluk never use or used swords as weapons.

Now the information Bruce was furnished with came mostly
114 from Achmet Sid el Gom, the alleged regicide of Sennar. This man
643 is from Fasugli, and as we always have to be cautious with Bruce's
statements, we do not know exactly whether Achmet Sid el Gom spoke
about the custom of king killing as it was in the past in his
country of birth. Professor Arad and Mr. Chataway are also of this
opinion. What supports such an idea is what Fraser says about the
ceremonial killing of the Fasugli kings. Fraser writes: "In some
tribes of Fazoql the king had to administer justice daily under
a certain tree. If because of sickness or any other cause he was
unable to discharge this duty for three whole days, he was hanged
on the tree in a noose, which contained two razors so arranged
that when the noose was drawn tight by the weight of the king's
body, they cut his throat". 74) Seligman also quotes three instances
from Fraser about the killing of the king at Fasugli. 75)

171 King killing is a widely spread custom in Africa, and to
643 try to cope with it is outside the scope of this paper. But in the
Nile Valley, we have instances of the existence of the custom in
Meroe, when king Ergamones cut the throats of the priests instead
of letting them kill him. We also have a story collected by
Probenius in Kordofan about the custom of king killing, and how
one king was able to avoid his fate; and henceforth, the custom
was abandoned. 76 This custom is in practice, or now in dormant
form, among the Shilluk, the Burun and many other tribes of Dar Fung.
It was alleged to be in existence among the Sennar kings, and was
also alleged to have been the custom of the Abdullah Arabs, who
were the viceroys of the Fung kings in the North. 77) If thus the
custom was widely spread in the Nile Valley, there is no point in
alleging that the custom in Sennar was brought by the Shilluk,
because it is now clear that the origin of such a custom is to be
sought after in the deep past of the cultures and civilisations
that were planted, or originated in the Nile Valley.

114 There is no doubt that the Dar Fung tribes, as well as
171 the Nuba of southern Kordofan, represent the older substratum of
174 the whole of the central and southern Sudan. This is judged by
643 their isolation, the poverty of their present lands - which are
merely rocky hills - the different languages and cultures etc.

73) Tremaux, p. 199

74) Fraser, p. 266

75) Seligman, p. 428

76) Probenius, L., Chapter I.

77) H.A. MacMichael, in his "History of the Arabs in the Sudan",
Cambridge 1922, quoted by Seligman, p. 428.

173 and Dimo quarrelled because the latter insisted on Nyikang's child being dissected to recover a valuable bead it had swallowed. Nyikang consequently again migrated. With a following of only six families he sailed down the Bahr el Ghazal¹ and landed some twenty miles west of Tonga at the site of the present village of Acietagwok.

The party advanced eastwards along the left bank to Nyilual where Nyikang made his headquarters. The country west of the site of Malakal was then uninhabited but they found the Anuak near the Sobat Mouth. It was agreed that the Shilluk should confine themselves to the west bank of the Nile and leave the Anuak in possession of the Sobat and the east bank. There was then no sign of the Nuer on the Zeraf Island.

Nyikang made his headquarters at Nyilwal and built his own village at Dedigo.² Since his son Dak made his village nearby at Falo it would appear that several decades passed before the Shilluk attempted to occupy country to the north of the Sobat Mouth. When they did so they were defeated, in a battle fought near the present village of Wau, by a red people, then in possession, whom the Shilluk describe as *Fuñ*³.

Exactly who these *Fuñ* were is uncertain, as also is the correctness of the Shilluk tradition that after much fighting they were expelled from their last stronghold at Demoth⁴ and driven over the river into the Maban country north-east of Melut. It seems more probable, in view of the smallness of Nyikang's party, that they came into contact and fought with an outlying colony of the Fung Kingdom, some of whom withdrew north-eastwards while the remnant fused with the immigrants and came in time to call themselves *Collo* too. At the same time the *Collo* army seems to have been reinforced by the enlistment of drafts of blacks, probably Nuba, who were called, somewhat contemptuously and to distinguish them from the *Collo* and the *Fuñ*

[114]
[174] 1. On the basis of reckoning 13 years to a reign and allowing about thirty to a generation the date of Nyikang's arrival can be estimated at about 1330. Hofmayr (*Die Shilluk*) however thinks that Ocalo was the first non-legendary king and estimates his date, on the same system of reckoning, at about 1600-1630.

2. In the settlement of Fanyidwal Pac.

3. In the course of this battle the Sacred Stool of Nyikang was captured, and the Shilluk say that this stool *Kuom* is still in the *Fuñ* country.

[713] 4. A village some 25 miles north of Kodok where traces of earthworks can still be seen.

535 leave the dancing ground. Within a few minutes the village is clear
881 of all guests, those who are unable to stand being swept along in the
rush.

881 Before dancing for the first time the initiate is usually presented
431 with two spears by his father. The sons of rich men are presented
[563] with a bull (*Wakh Owono*) as well.^a This bull is treated with great care
and affection by the young warrior and he is given a new name by
[583] his age-mates—taken from the colour of the bull and they alone may
call him so. Theoretically the bull is kept throughout his life, a new
one of similar colour and markings being substituted when it dies.
881 It is never given as bride-wealth. The initiates then visit their relatives
574 in the settlement and after a short period of travel return home. In
the past these visits were probably on a wider scale and according to
Hofmayer "after the dance it is the custom for the Shilluk initiates
to lead a nomadic life for a time, traversing the country from one end
to the other." This statement is probably an exaggeration, but a
period of wandering visits is common among African peoples before
final reintegration into the community in adult status.

535 At the *Cong Bul*, initiates are introduced to their new privileges
764 together, but the rest of the warriors are not drawn up in age-sets.
881 At the "*Kwogo*" and "*Yok*," which are funeral ceremonies, the male
561 Shilluk are organized according to their respective age-sets. There
are few other occasions when the age-set system functions at all.

476 Among the Shilluk the more arduous processes of cultivation are
561 carried out communally. A man will invite his neighbours and relatives
to help him in his fields and will provide merissa for them afterwards.
The helpers are not necessarily his age-mates and it does not appear

[178] 8. The Shilluk say that the custom is dying out and that few fathers have bulls
to spare. In any case the youth will take the name of one of his father's bulls. The
Wakh Owono is a source of great pride to its owner and songs are composed about it which
are sung for the benefit of girls.

An approximate translation of the song of Ajak, an inhabitant of the Zeraf mouth is
as follows:

" I have a grey bull, a great bull,
I am going to Golbain to buy a bell,
A bell for the bull that lives in
My fathers byre."

643 by a number of his wives carrying his personal luggage and his food,
[644] and with him also were some of his personal bodyguard. During
his three days seclusion at Debalo, the *reth* is said to be in especial
danger of attack by his rivals, and extra precautions are taken for his
safety.

[32] We were told—but did not see at close quarters—that fires are
ceremonially lit and that fire-sticks were used for this purpose. There
are three possible explanations of this; that the fire is lit as a ritual
act and as part of the initiation of the *reth*; the Shilluk expression
pie mac suggests some form of symbolic purification or initiation, for
it is an expression used in that context by other Nilotics; that fires
were lit round the confines of the village as an added precaution against
marauders; or merely numerous fires lit to cook the meat of sacrifice.
[114] Both the latter explanations are suggested by Munro in his account
of the installation of *reth* Fafiti in 1917.

Whether the lighting of fires was a precautionary measure of
security, a ritual act, or merely for purposes of feasting, the measures
taken to safeguard the *reth* were manifest in other ways. A special
homestead had been built for his reception in fine style with the eight
cross-ties which are a symbol of royalty. It was situated in a
particularly ostentatious position in the village of Debalo. But the
reth did not occupy it. Instead, in order to deceive his enemies, he
took up residence in a very ramshackle hut, which had no embellish-
ments whatever.

643 The *reth*'s stay at Debalo is not truly a period of seclusion. He
776 has removed himself from all possible contact with Nyikang or his
followers from the northern division of Gol Dhiang, but holds court
among his own supporters, who flock in to pay homage from the division
of Gol Nyikang. As yet we have formed no definite conclusions as
to why the *reth* moves so hurriedly to Debalo as soon as Nyikang
reaches Nyigir. Shilluk say that the *reth* has "fled" from Nyikang,
and that he sends messengers to Nyikang beseeching him to stay away.
It may be that this is considered a suitable sign of humility in accepting
the office of *reth* of the Shilluk. Nyikang's attitude of arrogant

643 to the mound of Fashoda, which is called Aturwic, and with it the shield and spears of Nyikang.

The *reth* was now in seclusion. No one but his most personal attendants might visit him. We were told that he would be stripped, bathed, and clothed in new robes during that afternoon. It was neither seemly nor possible to enquire too deeply into this part of the investiture, for it is conducted in strict secrecy. There is evidence that this ritual bathing takes place within the temporary camp Adul, because the smaller of the two huts is known as the "bathing room." Shilluk say that the *reth* is bathed alternately with hot and cold water, so that he shall not be subjected to extremes of temperature. It is a symbolic rite emphasizing his people's desire that he shall rule them with even temper throughout his reign. The fact is mentioned by [114] Munro in his account of Fasiti's installation (Note 18), and informants confirmed the tradition at the installation of *reth* Anci.

[273] During the heat of the day the main crowds dispersed to their homes, but there were still large numbers of Shilluk sitting in and around Fashoda that evening. Most of these were relatives and friends of the inhabitants of the capital, who provided them with refreshment, since the ban on drinking beer was lifted after the *reth*'s retirement. The Ororo and attendants of the *reth* were putting up wind-screens round the *reth*'s camp, under which they would sleep [669] that night to guard him from possible attack. The danger to the *reth*'s life was not yet over, a fact which repeatedly appeared from the care and attention of his guardians. The Shilluk describe this period of the ceremonies as "the *reth*'s camp outside Fashoda", and it was evident that he had not, in the eyes of the Shilluk, entered his capital. His final acceptance by Nyikang and by the Shilluk people still remained in doubt, though one of the most dangerous periods of his initiation from election to final installation had been successfully passed.

The same evening outside the shrine of Nyikang some of the

INSTALLATION OF A *REK*

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Such was the atmosphere as Nyikang left for home after his thirtieth installation. 643
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NOTES

1. The Great Divisions of the Shilluk Kingdom. The Shilluk kingdom is divided into two parts in two different ways. An archaic religious division into two "sees" called Gol Nyikang (south) and Gol Dhiang (north) seems only to be important on ceremonial occasions such as the installation of the *rek* or the rebuilding of Faahoda. Each "see" has one ceremonial chief. 631
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Investigation has shown that these two "sees" are not coterminous with the two great temporal provinces of Gerr and Luak. The traditional boundary between Gerr (northern provinces) and Luak (southern provinces) is some 15 miles south of Faahoda between the sections of Both and Fathau. The sections from Both northwards to Yoiny are small sections composed of a succession of small villages, which the Shilluk liken to the beads of an ostrich eggshell necklace and call collectively Wirek (an ostrich eggshell necklace).

In the 19th. century there was opposition between Gerr and Luak over rival candidates for the *rek*ship, when the Turkish Government tried to get Ajang accepted as *rek*, and between Akol and Kur, Gerr supporting Ajang and Kur, and Luak supporting Kwikwon and Akol. 616
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669
643

When the two great provinces mobilized against each other for civil war, for their organization is primarily military, the small sections of Wirek were overawed or defeated by the forces of Luak, though they should have mobilized with Gerr, and they turned traitor.

After *rek* Kur returned from Omdurman and defeated the forces of Akol (Luak and Wirek) and exiled Akol, the old boundary was restored, and Wirek returned once more to Gerr.

This is one of the few occasions when we diverge from Pumphrey's account of the Shilluk *S.N.R.* Vol. 2, p. 27 ("The Shilluk Tribe"). The distinction between the two sets of divisions becomes clearer when dealing with an occasion such as the installation of the *rek*. [14]

614 are not a clan now, and are messengers chosen *ad hoc*, as far as we could judge. *Twol* is the word used for the *reth*'s messengers.

613 12. These messages amounted to a bargaining about how many cows the *reth* should give Nyikang. Whether the intention was to bribe Nyikang to come and instal the *reth*, or to persuade him to stay away because of his "holiness" is not clear. We incline to the latter explanation, but Mr. McClure favours the former.

612 13. *Nyakwut*, meaning the girl, or woman, connected with the ceremonies, could be used of any individual female participant.

613 ceremonies, could be used of any individual female participant.

778 14. Our impression of those ceremonies witnessed by us was that Nyikang was held in manifest awe.

613 15. Cerfuc, and Kal wi Jang. Cerfuc is what the Shilluk say used to be a pool and is now filled up, but was carefully weeded for the occasion. Kal wi Jang, or Ujang, is 200 yards N.E. of Cerfuc.

778 16. All objects of great sanctity were covered in white cloth. The wrapping of cattle in cloth may merely signify their ritual value, and the necessity for screening them from the public gaze, but with all cattle it was evident how careful the Shilluk were to see that the animal was blindfold. After wrapping the animal the cloth itself was greatly prized as a sacred relic, being imbued with the sanctity of the animal.

173 17. Tradition says that the original stool was captured by the "Fany" and never returned. The present stool is a substitute. 778 The cloth wrappings made it impossible to see the exact shape, but it had four legs, and appeared to be about twenty inches long and ten inches wide.

610 18. P. Munro, "The installation of the *reth* of the Chol". *S. N. R.* Vol. I, pp. 145 ff., reprinted as Appendix I in *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan* by C. G. and B. Z. Seligman, p. 546.

613 19. This remark shows that the property of the *reth* is also property of Nyikang—at least after the installation is completed. 778 Actually the cattle paid to the Kwa Okelo belonged to Fafiti, but

INSTALLATION OF A BETH

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APPENDIX III.

(W.P.G.T.)

LIST OF CLANS PARTICIPATING IN THE INITIATION CEREMONIES.

References are made to the list of Shilluk clans in Westermann. *The Shilluk People* pp. 128-134. 614
643

Kwa Mal. The clan which claims the privilege of sowing cowrie shells in the path of the *reth* on his journey from Debalo to Arepejur. Westermann lists them as 2 and 2a, but assigns to them the functions which we believe are performed by Kwa Nyikwom.

Kwa Nyikang. The clan which provides the ceremonial blacksmiths for the royal spears. Westermann lists them as No. 8, but assigns to them a different function. The duties of Westermann's No. 60, Kwa Anut, seem similar (the making of fire by friction).

Kwa Okelo. The clan charged with producing the small girl, *nyakavr*, for the ceremonial marriage. Westermann lists them as No. 24, not No. 15.

Kwa Nyikir. The clan responsible for the management of the funeral dance; called by Westermann Kwa Nyikal and listed as No. 65.

Kwa Nyikwom. The high priests of Nyikang at Akurwa, who carry Nyikang to Fashoda, and tend his shrine. They drive off intruders with whips on the way to Fashoda. Not listed by Westermann, though his No. 2, "Kwa Lek" has similar functions.

Kwa Ojal. The clan which produces the heifer for the journey from Debalo to Fashoda. Not listed by Westermann.

Kwa Wung. The clan responsible for beating the drum which applauds approved speeches on the last day of the installation ceremonies. Westermann lists Kwa Wan as No. 44.

NOTE. We find that this list of clans given by Westermann betrays marks of haste. He assigns one home for most clans. While the clans are generally to be found in the place he mentions, several other lineages of the same clan are frequently found elsewhere. [114]

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The next day December 30th, *Adul*, the temporary camp outside Fashoda, was built by Jago Yorleiker. This time he built both huts, and the chief of *Gol Dhiang* had no part.

On the 31st the *reth* and Nyikang were ready for the installation ceremonies. Nyikang and his army left Nyigir at about 9.00 a.m. and went straight to the village north of Fashoda, where they had to wait some two hours for the *reth* to start from Debalo. The army of Nyikang moved steadily this time and seldom turned back in countermarch as it had done in 1944. The *reth* was delayed ceremonially till about midday. His form of procession was similar to 1944, and the cattle which were bride-wealth for Nyakwer were observed being driven along beside his army.

There had been an abnormal White Nile flood in 1946, as in 1917 at the time of the installation of *reth* Fafiti, and the Khor Arepajur, which was dry in March 1944, was now an expanse of water about 80 yards wide. When the *reth* arrived at the khor, the *Golbeiny* dragged the small black bull to the southern bank. The *reth*, taking Nyakwer by the hand, stepped over the bull and into a canoe. He was paddled across the khor with Nyakwer sitting behind him, while his followers forded the stream.

As the two parties of Nyikang and the *reth* approached each other Nyikang dashed forward and captured the *reth* without a struggle and began at once to carry him off to Cerfuc (op. cit. p.p. 61 & 78) Fashoda. This corresponded with Munro's observation in 1918 (*Sudan Notes & Records* Vol. I), but not with what we had seen in 1944, when there had been a spectacular mock battle with millet stalks. I was told that they had "made a mistake" in 1944, and also that owing to the hardness of the millet stalks they were afraid of injuring someone. This latter reason had not cancelled the fight in 1944. There is another possible reason: the *reth* himself was feeling in a state of acute personal danger, owing, as he thought, to the likelihood of someone making an attack on his life. He may have issued orders at the last moment that the battle was not to take place, in case someone should take advantage of the confusion to attack him. This seems more possible because the *reth*'s army were all carrying millet stalks as they crossed the khor, as if in preparation for the mock battle.

643

The rest of the ceremonies closely followed precedent. *Reth* Dak, while enthroned on the stool was "possessed" by Nyikang, in the same way as *reth* Anei had been. He was afterwards led away to seclusion in *Adul* leading Nyakwer by the hand. An incident which may be of interest occurred while the *reth* was being led to *Adul*. The

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NOTES ON THE DEATH OF A RETH OF THE SHILLUK

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of his throne, the spirit of the divine Nyikang, which had been as it were in suspension since the last *reth* Anel Kur had passed over a year ago, had entered into Dak Fadlet, and once again the Shilluk people could resume their normal life. 643

NOTES.

1. *The body of Nyikang.*

It was explained in our previous article that the body of Nyikang consisted of a bundle of bamboos brought from the Nuba Mountains. I now believe that this is not the case and that only Dak's body is of bamboo. It is more likely that the bundle is of ambatch, indeed this is generally believed. The Shilluk believe that the soul of a mortal can pass into a stick of ambatch, and I am informed by Dr. J. A. Heasty that if a Shilluk dies away from his home his relatives hold a ceremony to make his soul pass into a stick of ambatch, which they take back to his village and bury there. 14 778 775 824

2. *The vigil of the Beads 'Ootero,' which are tied on to the reth's ankle.* 301

I interviewed the old *wyirath* who is responsible for these beads. She was reluctant to tell me much, and refused to show me the beads. I asked her, for she had great experience of these matters, how it came that some beads appeared with holes in them, and she told me that as she sat over them at night the ones which appear with holes went 'pop.' She told me that four had appeared with holes for *reth* Fasiti in 1918, and one for *reth* Anel and five for *reth* Dak. She said four or five were about right, one was too few, and more than five was too many. The beads with holes are tied on to the *reth*'s ankle only during the ceremonies, and after that they apparently close up. 643

3. *Nyakwer.*

It was not clear in 1944 what became of Nyakwer. It now appeared that she became *barath*, i.e. will become a wife of the *reth* when she grows up. The girl who was Nyakwer in 1944 still lives in Fashoda, and is now about 13 years old. There was of course a different girl in 1948. 114 643 644

4. *Fashoda.*

The sacred village of Fashoda was most beautifully cleaned and repaired for the installation. All the houses had had their fences renewed, and courtyards replastered with mud, though none of them was rebuilt. The whole of the mound on which the royal shrine of 643 644 778

SUDAN NOTES AND RECORDS

The Death and Burial of *reth* Dak and
FADIET OF THE SHILLUK

By P. P. HOWELL

121 THE following observations are intended to amplify previous accounts of the death and burial of Shilluk Kings.¹ I was not able on this occasion to follow the ceremonies in detail, for the death of a Shilluk *reth* and the installation of his successor is carried out over a long period with a mass of ritual observance. I attended some of the ceremonies, had conversations with some of the participants later and am also indebted to Mr. J. L. Baker, then District Commissioner of the Shilluk, for much of the information recorded here.

643 I have assumed in the reader some knowledge of previous publications on the subject. In broad outline the procedure followed may be summarized 766 as follows:—

- (1) Immediately after his death the body of the *reth* is carried to a village with which he has had previous close association and is there ceremonially inhumed in a special hut. It should remain there for a period which varies between a few months and over a year.
- (2) Meanwhile, the new *reth* is elected in the traditional manner by an electoral college of hereditary chiefs and, unless internal conflicts follow over the choice, begins to prepare himself for his installation.
- (3) The remains of the late *reth* are then removed from the hut and carried to the village of his birth or adoption, and there buried in the house formerly occupied by him. Full mourning ceremonies in which a large proportion of the population play their part follow.
- (4) Preparations for the installation, involving all sorts of preliminary ritual observance and ceremonies, continue and the final stages are timed to take place after the harvest and before the rains.
- 643 (5) The formal installation then takes place and consists of the march of Nyikang (the original *reth* and culture-hero of the Shilluk who is represented in effigy) from Aburwa to Fashoda;

[113] ¹ See in particular: Munro, P., *Installation of the Reth of the Chel, Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. I, 1918; Howell, P. P., and Thomson, W. F. G., *The Death of a Reth of the Shilluk and the Installation of his Successor, S.N. & R.*, Vol. XXVII, 1946; Thomson, W. F. G., *Notes on the Death of a Reth of the Shilluk, S.N. & R.*, Vol. XXIX, 1946. Also Evans-Fritchard, E. E., *The Dinka Kingdom of the Shilluk of the Nile in Sudan*, Fraser Lecture, 1948, Cambridge University Press.

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4. *jago Arurwei* (Fadit Division)
5. *Awanyireth Akwei* (Detwak Division)
6. *jago Ongwany* (Muomo Division)
7. *jago Otwak* (Fanyidwai Division)
8. *Awanyireth Dhiikwan* (Nyijok Division)
9. *Awanyireth Yomon* (Lul Division)
10. *Awanyireth Geny* (Malakal Division)

I informed them of three candidates who on various grounds were unacceptable to the Government and left them. On the night of the 13th matters were hastened because *wyireth* Kur was summoned by the Electoral College and marched with his followers to Akwshai to await daylight and formal acceptance. I arrived at 7.30 a.m. on the morning of the 14th and found the new *reth* already in Fashoda which he had entered after stepping over a sheep tethered to the ground⁶. I waited for two hours while certain rituals (*awer*) was performed, including the making of new fire by rubbing fire-sticks together (*fir mac*), water boiled over the fire and used for the shaving of the *reth's* head. The chiefs—a very large cross-section of Shilluk society, for only *Awanyireth* Deng of Apac, and the chiefs of Tonga and Fanyikang had not arrived—together with the men of Kodok and others present shouted their allegiance and a black ox (no other animal could be found) was speared, stood looking dazed for about five minutes and then fell on its left side (a good omen) just by the royal cattle byre. The chiefs dispersed on the 15th, leaving the *reth* to contemplate for a few days in his father's home, while Fashoda was being organized to house a new *reth* after being deserted for several weeks owing to *reth* Dak's absence in hospital.

Mr. Baker has also remarked that in the list of chiefs given above, only the first three are essential at this meeting. "The others are truly only witnesses or at most proposers of candidates." Thomson, speaking of the election of *reth* Dak, says "it was clearer to me than before that the choice rests entirely with the chiefs of Gai Dhiang and Gai Nyikang". "I doubt whether even the chief of the *Awanyireth* (*jago jang Awanyireth*) has any influence: he and the other members of the College have only to listen to a decision."

I had not the time to attend all the events or to investigate all the aspects of the preparations which led up to the installation on this occasion. Mr. Thomson and I between us had been able to cover much of the ground on the accession of *reth* Anei. Mr. Thomson was able to add further details on the installation of *reth* Dak. It must be remembered, however, that the death of one *reth* and the installation of another takes not less than a year to complete and that the ceremonies are set over a wide field from one end of Shilluk

⁶ See Howell & Thomson, *op. cit.* p. 31-33.

⁷ The significance of this act (*akadik*) is discussed in a previous article: J.N.R. Vol. 33 Part I.

⁸ Howell & Thomson, *ibid.* p. 73.

⁹ Thomson, *op. cit.* p. 152.

[113] never *reth*. He appears in effigy during the final ceremonies of installation. [643] Nyidoro's position in the genealogy is doubtful; his burial place is unknown, but *reth* Fadiet built a shrine for him. Ocolo is often called Odak, which sometimes leads to confusion with Dak son of Nyikang. Odak's sons, with the exception of Duwad, were killed in battle and their sons were degraded to the status of *ororo*. Pyem is the ancestor of the *kw* Nyimol the main *ororo* clan. Hofmayr also mentions Akac (son of Duwad or Boc), but he was never *reth*. Abudok, eldest daughter of Boc, is said to have ruled the Shilluk and to have maintained her position by concealing the sex of Dokot, then only a child, who was dressed by her in a girl's apron.

[114] 3. Tugo (Hofmayr gives his dates as 1690-1710, but these are, of course, not authenticated) was the first Shilluk *reth* to have a settled capital and founded Fashoda. From him sprang the two main branches of the Royal House, *gol* Okon and *gol* Nyadwai. The latter are still *kw* *reth* even though no *reth* can now be chosen from their numbers; *reth* Fadiet tried unsuccessfully to degrade them to *ororo*. Some Shilluk mention Ngu Akwo, son of Nyadwai, as being *reth* after Wak, while Nyadwai's brother Ngu Aba never ruled. Nyelgud is a nickname for Nyator who is alleged to have been *reth* after Kudit.

[643] 4. All those eligible for the throne are from the House of Okon. Some alterations to previously recorded genealogies should be made. Yor, called Adodit, was son of Akoc, not son of Kwathker. Kweikon, son of Kwathker, should be included; Akol, a rival of Yor and later of Kur, was never installed at Fashoda, though some kind of installation ceremony was held for him by the southern Shilluk at Fanyidwai. Deidunyal, son of Ajang, was elected, but never installed and is not included. In fact many candidates for the throne were backed by only one element in Shilluk society, but failed to get themselves installed and these should not be included.

APPENDIX II.

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INSTALLATION OF A NEW SHILLUK KING

[The following account, by a Shilluk pupil at Rumbek Secondary School, originally appeared in the *Rumbek Magazine* for 1954, and is reprinted with the permission of the Ministry of Education. It is, so far as is known, the first written account of the ceremony by a member of the Shilluk people. The article has been read by Dr. P. P. Howell, who considered it to be of sufficient interest to warrant publication in *Sudan Notes and Records*.]

When the Reth of the Shilluk dies, all the senior chiefs of the thirteen divisions of the country are summoned to Fashoda, the chief reigning village (pan duong), by the District Commissioner and the Head Chief of Fashoda Division, to attend the election of the new Reth.

The new Reth is not to be elected from among the late Reth's sons, but from another branch of the Royal Family. In the election the elder son of a Reth and a left-handed Prince cannot be elected, according to traditional custom. A woman has no claim to the Rethship. It happened once in the past that there was one Queen called Abudhok who reigned in Fashoda, but from thenceforward no woman has held the Rethship.

As soon as the Nyireth (Prince) is elected Reth he is taken to Fashoda, where he remains quietly until the late Reth's wuowo (mourning dance) has been held. After this, the installation of the new Reth, or the coronation ceremony, follows. Before the coronation the people of Padhiang, north-west of Fashoda, are sent to the Nuba mountains to fetch some holy bamboos which are used in the coronation, and the blacksmiths of Goltanyo at the northern side of Fashoda, and those of Nyinkango and Both in the south, are busy making the coronation spears. First comes from among the Nyinkango's army (Kwanyikwom) pass to Obay in the southern part of the country to bring some palm leaves for making whips with which they beat people during the coronation. In Debalo Kwom there are some people carving ivories. The performers of the coronation fix some branches of thorn trees in front of their villages on the roads, being authorized by tradition to stop any man passing along that road without his giving an offering to them. The people of Tonga paddle far south in their canoes to Lake No to fetch the umbatch (abomi Nyinkango).

After the accomplishment of all these things, the Reth is taken to Debalo Kwom south of Fashoda, a village where the coronation seat is kept. In Debalo there is a little herd of cattle from Pathaw which the Reth looks after, and he is treated roughly like a small boy by the head chief of Debalo, before he takes his position as Reth. Nobody is allowed to go among these cows or to take any fire from among them. Any unfortunate fellow going near them is seized by Kwa Nyuth and made to give something. These cows go together with the Reth to Fashoda where he looks after them again.

In this installation there are two rival armies, the army of the Reth and the army of Nyinkango. Nyinkango's army brings the images of Nyinkango and Dak his son from Akurwa, a village in the northern part of the country. Without the power of Nyinkango and Dak the new king cannot be crowned. When the party leaves Akurwa they have four resting places before they reach Fashoda. In the last, Adot Nyigir, two miles from Fashoda, they await the arrival of the Reth's army from Debalo.

¹ Nyinkango was the founder of the Shilluk Kingdom. At his death he is said not to have been buried but to have disappeared in the sky.

SUDAN NOTES AND RECORDS

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INSTALLATION

OF THE

KING OF THE CHOL (KING OF THE SHILLUKS)

BY P. MUNRO.

In writing the following description of the above event I have attempted to adhere as strictly as possible to what was actually observed. This is more difficult than it appears for two reasons: first it is almost impossible to keep the mind oblivious of the innumerable traditions which have attached themselves to the ceremony and which are set forth in the main by Seligman⁽¹⁾ and Westermann⁽²⁾, and secondly the constant ebb and flow of the very large company present make accurate observation of detail in some cases almost impossible. [24]

The small discrepancies noted in the actual ceremony as compared with the account of the same as given by Seligman p. 254 are, in my opinion, probably due to the fact that any enquirer would certainly be told of any existing traditions as regards various separate installations. The main essentials are the same, but in small details each installation probably varies in accordance with its special circumstances. For the sake of clearness I have divided this article into two sections: a) Necessary preliminary remarks; b) The actual narrative. [25]

⁽¹⁾ Seligman Vol. II, *General Science*, 4th Report of Williams Research Laboratories, p. 216 et seq.

⁽²⁾ Westermann, *The Shilluk People*.

126 Unfortunately I was unable to stay longer, and as the actual religious ceremonies had been safely completed, I asked Yuzbashi Hussein Farag, Mamur Kodak, to return to Fashoda on the 20th and take note of any further ceremonies. The following information is from notes given to me by him: "Apparently the Ret went up to his palace from the "temporary hut" during the night of the 19th. On the 20th in the morning the Ret left his palace accompanied by a large crowd. He was dressed in a game skin, and with him was the sacred stool. His escort were holding the shield. Nyakang also left his shrine escorted by a great company of people. Then there occurred the mock battle with dura stalks⁽¹⁾. When the two armies meet, the Ret's people as though frightened of the people of Nyakang, ran towards the palace. The young girl of Kwa Okel on this day was with Nyakang's people, and when the "battle" was joined, the Ret seized her and carried her off to his palace.

178 "Nyakang then returned to the Shrine, where he is said to remain till the rainy season. Four persons are left as his escort.

581 "The Ret is said to stay another three days in his palace and then come out and meet his chiefs. Every orator speaks in his turn and before talking puts his spear on the ground. If his speech sounds good to the people, the drum is beaten as a token of applause. The spears laid down become the property of the Ret. The young girl stays with the Ret till she grows up, and the Ret can then wed her to any Shilluk he pleases."

P. Munro.

Malakal, February 1918.

114 ⁽¹⁾ Seligman (p. 225) states the mock battle occurs at the khor before the ceremony. No dura stalks were used on the 17th at the time of the mock fight seen by me. It would appear to be one of those instances in which different installations vary.

* 797 them as to how they were to treat his friends, as he called
 [643] the missionaries. Conditions improved after this, and also by
 the arrival in June of three Sisters of Verona, with Mother
 Guiseppa Scandola as Superior, to assist in the mission work.
 When Mother Guiseppa received orders to start for Lul, one
 of the Sisters in Assuan told her that she envied her good
 fortune in going to work in the mission. 'Do not worry,'
 she replied, 'in four months you will come to take my place.'
 Soon after her arrival in Lul, Father Beduschi became very
 ill and was at death's door, but Mother Guiseppa, who was
 herself ill at the time, sent him this message: 'Have no fear,
 Father; you will not die, you have hard work to do for the
 Shilluk. I am old and useless; I shall die in your stead.'
 Two days later, Father Beduschi, completely recovered,
 gave the last Sacraments to the Sister, and she died on
 September 1st. Her successor as Superior was the very Sister
 to whom she had made the prophecy in Assuan. She was a
 woman remarkable for her devotion and holiness. In this
 [643] same year, too, the British Government deposed the king,
 [648] Kur, whose successor, Fadiet, was much more friendly to the
 mission.

From this time onwards the number of Christians began
 to grow, and the mud hut which had served as a church was
 [340] replaced by a larger brick building in 1911. The priest who
 was Superior of Lul at that time was Father Banholzer, who
 was noted for his extensive knowledge of the Shilluk language
 and tribal customs and the untiring zeal with which he
 worked among the native people, so that many Shilluk
 remember him still as the 'Great Father'. One day in 1914 he
 shot a hippopotamus and was out in the sun for several hours
 dividing the meat, as a result of which he had an attack of
 sunstroke. He went to Kodok to be treated by the doctor,
 but died there in the arms of a native, and the first intimation
 of his death which his fellow priests at Lul received was the
 arrival of his body carried by natives in a boat.

• [714] A successor of Father Banholzer was Father Kohnen, who
 wrote a Shilluk grammar and translated the New Testament
 and a Bible History into that language.